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Part II

LAND TENURE

Historical Introduction

22. At the end of the eighteenth century, the basin of the great Rejang River was a sparsely populated region. The whole of its southern flank (the part which is the particular concern of this report), the area, that is, drained by the Kanowit, Poi, Ngemah, Katibas and Baleh rivers, was an unbroken tract of primeval rain-forest, virtually untouched by man. Here and there along the main rivers of this region (the Rejang between Sibu and the Pelagus Rapids, and parts of the Baleh), there were settled communities—such as the Kanowits, the Tanjongs, and the Lugats—living in long-houses and cultivating the land. But these scattered peoples numbered not more than one or two thousand souls, and their activities had wrought little change in their natural environment. Most of this vast tract of forest was the territory of bands of nomadic Ukits and Bukitans, who relied on the plants and animals of the jungle for their subsistence, and who did not practise the cultivation of rice, or of any other staple crop. During the nineteenth century major changes were to happen. This largely inviolate natural region became the scene of human migrations which were to alter the entire face of the land. The newcomers—the Iban—came from the immediate south. They were a virile and truculent people, whose whole way of life was based on the cultivation of hill rice. For them, the virgin forests of the valleys of the Rejang held the promise of those bountiful and heavy harvests which are the foremost aim of all Iban endeavour. Moreover these forests—so sparsely inhabited—were the territory of no powerful rival tribe; they were there for the taking, and take them the Iban did. By any standards these great Iban migrations into the Rejang and beyond were the most momentous happening in the social and economic history of nineteenth century Sarawak.

23. At the commencement of the nineteenth century, there were probably no Iban living north of the southern watershed of the Rejang basin. To-day, there are more than 114,000 Iban[1] settled in areas northward of this line (Sketch Map 2). They constitute more than one-fifth of the total population of Sarawak, and more than three-fifths of the entire Iban population of the country. In both the Third and Fourth Divisions, they are now the dominant groups in mixed populations.

24. The documentation of the Iban migrations into the valleys of the Rejang is far from complete (especially in its initial stages); but such records as do

[1] In the Population Census of 1947, the Iban (or Sea Dayak) population of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Divisions is shown to be 113,498, while that of Brunei is shown as 1,330. The total population of Sarawak was 546,385, including 190,326 Ibans.

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exist[1] make it possible to outline the principal events. Two main movements may be discerned:

(*a*) from the Lemanak, Skrang and Layar rivers, into the Entabai, the Julau, and other headwaters of the Kanowit River;

(*b*) from the headwaters of the Batang Lupar, and the Kanyau (a tributary of the Kapuas River, now in Indonesian Borneo), into the Katibas River.

It is with the tracing of the latter movement that we shall be particularly concerned, for it was initiated by people whose descendants now occupy the Baleh (and most of the other tributaries of the Rejang, between the Ngemah and the Pelagus Rapids)—the area to which this report primarily refers.

25. The movement into the Katibas headwaters probably began during the early decades of the nineteenth century. It is not possible to establish a precise chronology. It is known, however, that two of the men who participated in this initial movement were the brothers Naga and Sumping, one of whom was the grandfather of the noted Pengulu Mata Ari, who died at Nanga Sut, in the lower Baleh, on 7th January, 1931,[2] when well over 80 years of age. Mr. E. V. Andreini (then Acting District Officer, Kapit), who visited him at Nanga Sut in 1926, estimated that Mata Ari was born in about 1840[3]. Early in 1850, in a letter to Francis McDougall, the Rajah, Sir James Brooke[4], refers to the already numerous people of the Katibas, Julau, Poi and Kanowit rivers, and by that date, the migrations had probably been in process for several decades. However, the first detailed account of the migration into the Katibas is contained in the journal of the Second Rajah (then Tuan Muda), kept during his arduous pioneer journey from the Batang Lupar to the Batang Rejang, via the Ulu Ai, Sungai Lubang Baya, and the Katibas. On the 5th December, 1861, when passing through the area, the Tuan Muda made this entry in his journal:

"This Katibas river must muster about 10,000 souls; and here is one instance of the rapid increase of inhabitants, as they came here from the Batang Lupar, in which river there are now more than can use the land according to the Dayak method of farming. And these inhabitants seem to be fast clearing every hill in the vicinity of the Katibas river."[5]

Again, several years later (in 1864), when discussing increases in Iban population, the Tuan Muda wrote:

"To offer one instance of the multiplying process, I will mention the upper Batang Lupar river, which has now a population of eighteen or twenty thousand souls residing on it, and has emitted a supply, about fifty years ago, to a neighbouring stream (a tributary of the Rejang),[6] from which a population has now increased to from ten to twelve thousand souls, without the aid of any admixture from other directions.[7]

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[1]During the period of my research in the Baleh I collected a series of genealogies which reached back to the initial stages of the Iban migrations into the Katibas River; later, in the Second Division, I collected further data, from quite independent sources, which fully confirmed my Baleh material. I hope to be able to publish all this material in detail at a later date.

[2]"Sarawak Gazette," 1931, p. 65.

[3]"Sarawak Gazette," 1927, p. 17.

[4]Sir James Brooke, in a letter to Francis McDougall, dated Penang, April 27th, 1850 (MSS., S.P.G. archives, London).

[5]Charles Brooke, "Ten Years in Sarawak," 1866, vol. 2, p. 192.

[6]i.e.: the Katibas River.

[7]Charles Brooke, 1866, vol. 2, p. 336.

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175 From this evidence, and from genealogies and traditions, it appears that the
167 Iban first began to percolate into the headwaters of the southern tributaries of the Rejang during the first and second decades of the nineteenth century.[1]

175 26. Soon after the middle of the century, those who migrated into the Katibas
167 had reached the main Rejang river. Temenggong Koh (now living in the Baleh
648 headwaters), makes the claim that his maternal grandfather, Ba, was among the
721 first Iban to emerge from the Katibas, and settle on the banks of the Batang Rejang. Their first settlement was in the vicinity of Sungai Song (on the true right bank of the Rejang); but later they moved down river to near the mouth of the Poi, under the instructions of Mr. H. Steele, who since 1851, had been in charge of the Government fort at Kanowit.[2] Following the murder of Steele and Fox, in June, 1859, the Iban of the Katibas joined forces with the Tuan Muda in his punitive expedition against the Kanowits (and others involved), in the nearby Kabah river. This event aggravated the existing enmity between the Iban and the peoples of the upper Rejang, (the Kajangs, and the Kayans), and led to retaliatory raids. In December, 1861, when travelling the lower reaches of the Katibas, the Tuan Muda passed the blackened posts of an Iban house which had been burnt during a recent 'treacherous attack' of the Kayans. The Katibas Iban gained their revenge; and most drastically, during the great expedition of 1863, as members of a force of about 12,000 men (from all parts of the country), which, led by the Tuan Muda, ascended the upper Rejang, and launched a crushing attack on its inhabitants. The main objective of this expedition was to avenge the murder of Steele and Fox; but many only very remotely connected with that outrage, suffered in the mass retribution. The Iban vanguard penetrated well beyond the Bakun Rapids of the Balui, taking heads and captives, burning and pillaging. Never again were the Kayans and other inhabitants of the headwaters to offer serious resistance to the Iban occupation of the lower and middle sections of the Rejang. Even prior to 1863, the Iban had begun to occupy land on the banks of the Rejang, above its confluence with the Katibas, for the Tuan Muda mentions that in May, 1863, after passing the mouth of the Katibas, he came upon a few Iban 'farming-grounds' which had been abandoned several years before in consequence of Kayan attacks. With this exception however, it was an uninhabited region, with 'a vegetation luxuriant to the wildest extent.' At Kanowit, in October, 1863, a formal peace was made with the Kayans and other tribes of the interior. The Iban were now free to resume and extend their occupation of the main valley of the Rejang, with its 'rich, untouched vegetation,' and to infiltrate into its numerous minor tributaries.

175 27. A very significant feature of the Iban migrations into the Rejang basin,
167 was the special relationship—symbiotic in character—which existed between the
648 Iban and the Bukitans. The nomadic Bukitans, whose ancestral territory the Rejang was, acted as guides and allies to the more numerous and more accomplished Iban, and under Iban influence they gradually came to follow Iban

[1]The movement into the Kanowit headwaters appears to have occurred some years later than the movement into the Katibas. Writing early in 1859, the Tuan Muda remarked of the Kanowit River: "This stream is inhabited by Sea Dayaks, who have for the last fifteen or twenty years been migrating from the Saribas and Skrang districts for the purpose of obtaining new farming grounds. These exoduses took place overland between one river and another. Such parties would do their four or five days' march, then build their houses, and proceed to farm for one or two years, after which they would recommence their march, and so on . . ." (Charles Brooke, 1866, vol. 1, p. 327).

[2]Francis McDougall, in a letter dated 13th October, 1851 (MSS., S.P.G. archives, London).

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methods of cultivating rice, and ultimately, to live in long-houses of their own making. The nomadic Ukits, on the other hand, were inveterate opponents of the Iban, and contested their advance at many points, especially in the Baleh area. 175 167 648

First Entry into the Baleh

28. During the decade that followed the peace-making of 1863, the Iban continued to advance, and in 1874, the Government deemed it advisable to build a fort on the low-lying headland that marks the point where the Baleh joins the main flow of the Rejang. Three years later, however, the station was moved several miles down river to its present site at Kapit. No attempt was made to restrain the Iban, and by 1880, the lower reaches of the Baleh river had become quite thickly populated by them. How desirable to Iban eyes must have appeared this great expanse of virgin territory. A shifting-cultivator's paradise! But it was not to be—at least, not immediately. Head-hunting was too deep-rooted an element of Iban culture for it to be abandoned easily. For a period, Government inspired, or Government sanctioned expeditions had provided an outlet, but when these came to an end, privately organized excursions began to take place once more. But the suppression of head-hunting was a major aim of Government policy. When Government did intervene in the Baleh, the Iban responsible refused to submit to the Rajah's authority, and retreated (with their families) to the inaccessible and precipitous ranges at the head of the Mujong (one of the major tributaries of the Baleh river). Two Government expeditions were necessary (both in 1881), before the rebels were forced into surrender. The rebels were punished by heavy fines, and ordered to live below the Kapit fort, and the whole of the Baleh was cleared of Iban, and closed to further settlement. 175 167 648 721

29. Not for long, however, were the Iban to be contained below Kapit fort. Within less than ten years, they began to move overland (by way of Sungai Kapit), to the headwaters of the Sut—a tributary of the forbidden Baleh. When in July, 1899, Kirkpatrick (the Resident at Kapit), paid a visit to the Sut river, he found that its valleys contained 290 doors of Iban, and 21 doors of Bukitans.[1] Their occupation of the area (with its attendant cultivation) was accepted as a fait accompli, and no attempt was made to expel them. 175 167

30. At this same period other sections of the Iban people were embarking on further migrations to the northward—beyond the confines of the Rejang. These movements are described by the Resident, Third Division (H. F. Deshon), in his report to the Rajah for the year 1900: 'During the latter part of 1899, and the commencement of 1900, Your Highness was pleased to accord permission to Dayaks in the Second and Third Divisions to remove without restriction and settle in the rivers on the coast between Igan and Kadurong. About 1,000 doors have availed themselves of this permission, and are now distributed in the Oya, Mukah, Balingian, Tatau and Bintulu rivers, but mostly in the last three named.'[2]

31. But to return to the Kapit district, which is our particular concern. During the early years of the twentieth century, the migration overland from the main Rejang river, into the headwaters of the Sut continued. Thus, the Rajah Muda (C. V. Brooke), following a visit to the Sut river, in May, 1904, reported: 'It is 175 167 648 721

[1] "Sarawak Gazette," 1899, p. 284. The 290 Iban families would represent a population of about 1,650.

[2] "Sarawak Gazette," 1901, p. 59. The 1,000 doors would represent a population of about 5,700.

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175 surprising the number of Dayaks who have moved into the Sut river in recent
167 years. I made all recent arrivals pay to Government $10 a door as guarantees as to
648 future good behaviour, and ordered all down river Dayaks to clear out and return
721 to their own country."[1] At this period, the principal aim of Government policy was to control the head-hunting proclivities of the 'turbulent' Iban, and to prevent attacks being made on the Kayans and other tribes of the upper Rejang. Such restraints as were exercised over Iban occupation of new land, had this end in view. There is no evidence to suggest that any cognizance was taken of the possible ill effects of Iban methods of shifting cultivation. In 1904, the Government was again obliged to attack a group of Iban (men, women and children), who, in defiance of the Rajah's orders, had retreated to Bukit Batu—the mountain fastness at the head of the Mujong river. The attack (directed by Charles Hose, then Resident, Third Division) was successful, and the rebels were compelled to return to the Sut, and to other down river areas.[2]

Second Entry into the Baleh

175 32. For more than ten years, the stream of migration overland from the
167 Rejang into the headwaters of the Sut river had continued. It is clear, that from the very beginning this was nothing more than a way of circumventing the Government ban on the settlement of the Baleh. The main entry being blocked (i.e. by Fort Sylvia, at Kapit), the Iban resorted to a more circuitous route. Early in 1905 they decided to put the Government ban to the test. A large group (led by Pengulu Merum), paddled down the Sut, emerged into the main Baleh river, and settled its banks to about as far upstream as the mouth of the Mujong (i.e. for some five miles above the mouth of the Sut).[3] They must have numbered about 700 souls; an official report mentions that there were 128 doors grouped into 14 different long-houses.[4] Immediately after their arrival they set about the felling of the forest, and the cultivation of their *padi*. This action was a deliberate flouting of Government orders, and the Resident at Kapit at once sent word that all those 'living in the Baleh above the mouth of the Sut,' would have to leave the area at the end of the harvest (i.e. in about April, 1906).[5] In December, 1905, the Resident (I. Kirkpatrick) visited the Iban who were farming in the Baleh, and issued these orders in person.[6]

33. The Iban, in contravening Government regulations, had certainly hoped that they might ultimately get their own way; they can scarcely have expected the sudden volte-face in Government policy which occurred the following year when the aging Rajah visited Kapit. At a meeting held in Kapit on 25th April, 1906, the Rajah announced to the Iban that:

"The Baleh river should be open for occupation by Dayaks as far as the mouth of the Gat river; that no permanent dwellings would be permitted in the side rivers; and that anyone putting up a permanent dwelling beyond the boundary of the Gat river, would be dealt with severely."[7]

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[1] "Sarawak Gazette," 1904, p. 142.

[2] "Sarawak Gazette," 1904, p. 184; also, Hose and McDougall, "The Pagan Tribes of Borneo," 1912, vol. 2, p. 301 seq.

[3] Merum himself, who claimed that he had obtained permission from the Resident, Third Division, settled at Batu Bansa—near the present site (i.e. 1951) of Pengulu Jenggut's long-house; "Sarawak Gazette," 1905, p. 230.

[4] "Sarawak Gazette," 1905, p. 230; and 1906, p. 67.

[5] "Sarawak Gazette," 1906, p. 15.

[6] "Sarawak Gazette," 1906, p. 67.

[7] "Sarawak Gazette," 1906, p. 171.

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34. The Rajah's announcement was followed by a scramble for possession. Most of that area of the Baleh now open for settlement was still unoccupied, and furthermore, it was covered with the virgin forest so dear to the Iban cultivator's heart. Something like a land-rush ensued. Within less than three months, 1,500 *bilek* families had moved into the Baleh, and were "busily engaged quarrelling over farm-land."[1] They had mostly come from the Rejang and its tributaries, between the Katibas and Kapit. In his report to the Rajah, for the year 1906, the Resident, Third Division (C. Hose) described the situation in these words: "The Ulu Aï Dayaks having obtained permission from Your Highness to live in the Baleh, last May a rush was made for that river by all the Dayaks living near Kapit, and it was not until they found that the whole of the farming land in the Baleh had been occupied that the rush ceased. A few have entered the Sut, and some say that they intend to return to the Yong and Chermin rivers again after the harvest, as it is impossible to find sufficient land in the Baleh for their requirements."[2] By the end of 1907, the population of the Baleh had risen to some 1,903 doors, and, according to the Rajah Muda it was the "most thickly populated of any of the Dayak districts."[3]

35. But the Iban cultivator's appetite for fresh tracts of virgin forest was far from satiated. The Rajah Muda foresaw this as early as October, 1907, when he wrote: ". . . . farming land in a few years time will be very hard to get in the Baleh, and the Dayaks will be getting restless to move elsewhere. This will mean that they will want to get into the Mujong, the Gat, or in the main Baleh, above the Gat."[4] This prediction was very swiftly fulfilled. The Rajah's opening of the Baleh seems to have done little to allay Iban ambitions; even more desirable territory, in the tributaries of the Baleh, now lay invitingly close at hand. Moreover Government surveillance was now far less effective, for the fort at Kapit had been passed by, and strategically, the whole situation had changed. An observer who visited the area in 1908 reports that although there was then in the Baleh "plenty of good farming land as yet untouched," the Iban were already planning to move into the Mujong.[5] The occupation of the Mujong—in direct defiance of the Rajah's orders—began in the years 1909 and 1910. Once again it was led by Pengulu Merum, who was doubtless emboldened by the memory of his successful coup of 1905, for on that occasion, although he took the law into his own hands in occupying the Baleh, his action promptly received the seal of the Rajah's approval. Iban testimony shows that following these events the prestige of Merum was tremendous.[6] At about the same time, a similar movement into the Gat river began to take place, and beyond the Gat into the upper reaches of the Baleh.

36. This period of Iban expansion (i.e. from 1905 onwards) was not marked

[1] "Sarawak Gazette," 1906, p. 222.
[2] "Sarawak Gazette," 1907, p. 59.
[3] "Sarawak Gazette," 1908, p. 13 and p. 79.
[4] "Sarawak Gazette," 1907, p. 245.
[5] "Sarawak Gazette," 1908, p. 314.
[6] It is important to note that Pengulu Merum was a Government appointee. His history is an interesting one, for he was one of the principal members of the party of rebels that defied Government in 1881, at Bukit Batu. This was following the murder of a Malay in Sibu by Merum and others. After a lapse of 20 years, however, and while he was still living in the S. Sut, Merum was elected to the position of Pengulu. In April, 1906 (at the same meeting at which he announced the opening of the Baleh to the Iban) the Rajah appointed Merum to be Pengulu Ulu—thus making him responsible to Government for the supervision of Iban settlement in the Baleh headwaters.

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175 167 721 36. This period of Iban expansion (i.e. from 1905 onwards) was not marked by peaceful absorption in the cultivation of *padi*, instead there was a sharp recrudescence of head-hunting. During previous years, head-hunting incidents had occurred fairly regularly, but Government had been able to maintain at least a semblance of control by inflicting heavy fines on the transgressors. The occupation of the Baleh ushered in a new period which was to end in widespread and serious disaffection. A glance at the map will show the special geographical features of the Baleh; from its various tributaries there were feasible overland routes to the headwaters of the Rejang, the Mahakam and the Kapuas, and all these regions were inhabited by enemy tribes. The possibilities before the enterprising head-hunter were endless. As early as 1905, the Resident at Kapit reported to the Rajah Muda in these terms: "I cannot too strongly express to your Highness the restlessness which prevails in the upper waters. The Kayans are unable to farm or work away from their houses for fear of attacks from Dayaks, and even now they are very short of rice. They even talk of removing from the Rejang if this state of affairs continues as they are unable to obtain a livelihood."[1] This state of affairs was to persist until about 1919.

37. The movement of Pengulu Merum and his followers into the Mujong did not, at first, encounter any serious Government opposition, and by 1913, they had penetrated far inland and were farming the virgin hill sides of the Melinau and Tiau—two tributaries of the Mujong river.[2] It was the prelude to organized and open defiance of the Rajah's authority. In other parts of the Baleh similar unsanctioned expansion was taking place. There was steady infiltration into the Gat, and in 1913, another group of Iban, far exceeding the limits laid down by the Rajah in 1906, ascended the Baleh and entered the Merirai river.[3] These unauthorized movements were coupled with further illicit head-hunting, and finally the Government was impelled to take action. In February, 1915, a punitive expedition was launched against the Iban of the Gat river, and three months later, a large Government force attacked Merum and his followers, who had taken up a defensive position on Bukit Salong (in the Melinau headwaters), and declared themselves to be beyond the Rajah's power. They had believed their stronghold to be impregnable, but it quickly fell before the shelling of the Rajah's force, and its occupants fled, scattering to elude their attackers. Soon after this defeat, Merum and the majority of his followers surrendered themselves at Kapit, but there were some who still refused to recognize the Rajah's authority, and who joined the rebels of the Gat. For the most part, they were young men intent on further head-hunting and trouble-making.

38. Sporadic incidents continued to occur, but in April, 1916, a large party of rebels bound on a head-hunting foray, were surprised at Nanga Pila, in the upper Rejang, by a Government force, which, though numerically inferior, was well armed with rifles. In the encounter that ensued about 200 of the Iban lost their lives, and many were wounded. But even this severe defeat did not entirely quench the fiery spirits of the rebels; and the year 1918 saw a series of minor, though flagrant incidents. In March of that year, for example, a party of Gat rebels killed three Kayans within the very precincts of the Kapit fort.[4] In 1918, the Government again took action, by dispatching an expedition to the Gat for a second time. A large force (complete with Maxim gun) ascended the Gat river,

[1] "Sarawak Gazette," 1905, p. 230.
[2] "Sarawak Gazette," 1914, p. 27.
[3] "Sarawak Gazette," 1914, p. 43.
[4] "Sarawak Gazette," 1918, p. 91.

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destroying long-houses and *padi* fields, and driving the last of the rebels over the border, where they were in due course interned by the Dutch authorities, and handed over to the Government of Sarawak. The entire Baleh region was now empty of Iban. Those occupying the main river and the Mujong had been removed to below Kapit during the year 1915; and those in the Sut river (who were suspected of assisting the rebels of the Gat) had been compelled to leave early in 1918.

The Third Entry into the Baleh

39. The Baleh remained deserted during the next three years, until in 1922, the Iban were granted permission to re-occupy the river. And so for a third time these headstrong people, with their insatiable appetite for fresh areas of virgin forest, moved into the valleys of the Baleh. Both in the 1870's and in 1905, they had acted on their own initiative in occupying the Baleh, and even after the Rajah's approval had been granted in 1906, they were left very largely to their own devices. In fact, most of these Iban of the headwaters were then still a power unto themselves. It is abundantly clear—whatever may have been their protestations—that most of them gave no real recognition to the Rajah's sovereignty, but instead were temporizing as best they could, with a power which was to them both alien and irksome. By 1922, the situation had changed; the defeat at Nanga Pila, and the Mujong and Gat expeditions had forced the rebel Iban into submission, and for the first time, something like effective government was established. The re-occupation of the Baleh was carried out under close Governmental supervision.

40. However, not all of the Iban were involved in the disaffection we have been discussing; other groups, with more discerning leaders remained wholly obedient to the Rajah's authority. Thus in 1913, when Pengulu Merum and his followers were moving into the Melinau river in wilful defiance of Government orders, Koh and his followers, in response to the Rajah's suggestion, left their land in the Sungai Sut, and moved down river to Nanga Dia—a short distance below the Kapit fort—where they began the systematic planting of rubber and cassava. The Government had hopes that other Iban from the Baleh would follow this "good example." In that same year the Rajah appointed Koh to be a Pengulu. Koh, himself, was a recently reformed head-hunter—some ten years previously he had led a large scale raid against the Badangs (a tribe of Kenyah) of the Plieran, and then lived, for a time, as an outlaw in the remote headwaters of the Sut. But having acquired the prestige of a successful head-hunter, he soon came to adopt other tactics. He had the intelligence to realize the essential superiority of the Rajah's power, and the foresight to perceive the inevitable outcome of any attempt to defy that power by trial of arms. Accordingly, compliance and then active co-operation with the Rajah's government, became his guiding principles.

41. When, in 1922, the re-occupation of the Baleh took place, Pengulu Koh was given pride of place at the head of the river, while his son, Semada,[1] and his son-in-law, Grinang (both newly appointed Pengulu) were allotted similar positions in the Mujong and Gat rivers. Such a position at the head of a river was highly prized, for it meant direct access to the immediately adjacent areas of unexploited virgin forest. But the privileges of the Pengulus were accompanied by certain duties. In the main Baleh river, and all its major tributaries, points

[1]Pengulu Semada has now been succeeded by Pengulu Sibat, his sister's son.

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175 were fixed by Government, beyond which no Iban settlement or farming was
167 permitted. It was one of the duties of the Pengulus to guard these points, and to
report to Government any breach of the regulations. By October, 1923, about
648 95 long-house communities had re-occupied the Baleh and its tributaries.[1]
Government regulations covering the authorized limits of Iban settlement were
laid down, and—at the outset—strictly enforced. In January, 1924, for example,
Pengulu Grinang reported that a group of Iban had entered Sungai Puru (a side
stream of the Gat) in defiance of the regulations; in the following April, the
long-house of these law-breakers was burnt down by the District Officer, Kapit,
and a party of Rangers.[2]

Iban Rights in the Baleh Region

423 42. This leads us to the important point that none of the Baleh Iban (or, for
648 that matter, any of the Iban living north of the main Rejang river), possess
prescriptive or truly traditional rights over their lands. The territory from the
mouth of the Rejang to Kidurong Point was ceded to the First Rajah by the
Sultan of Brunei, in 1861. Thus the whole of the Baleh region had passed into
the hands of Government at least ten years before its first occupation by the
leading Iban migrants from the Second Division. Furthermore, from the very
commencement of Iban settlement in the Baleh there has been a Government
station in the immediate area—the first fort having been established at Nanga
Baleh in 1874. To-day, many Iban claim that they have traditional rights over
Baleh land, saying that it has been handed down from their remote ancestors.
Europeans unacquainted with the detailed history of the Kapit District are apt
to be misled by this specious claim, and if Government policy in the area is to be
properly implemented, it is of cardinal importance that the historical facts be
fully established, and clearly understood by all.

167 43. All re-settlement in the Baleh was under Government supervision, each
621 long-house community having land formally apportioned to it. The period was
also marked by widespread re-organization of long-house communities. Those
648 families which had remained faithful to the Rajah's authority were allowed to
return to more favourable sites than those who had openly defied Government
or tacitly supported the rebels. Consequently there was much re-grouping of
families into new or different communities. In general then, the land tenure
situation, and the present dispersal of long-houses in the Baleh area, are the
direct outcome of the historical events we have been discussing. In other words
they have been determined primarily by Government policy, and should not be
viewed as being the spontaneous expression of tendencies inherent in Iban
society.

167 44. When re-settlement took place each of the various long-house com-
621 munities was allotted a specified tract of land.[3] This tract usually bordered a
section of one of the main rivers or streams, and boundaries with neighbouring
648 long-houses were either tributary streams or well-defined ridges that demarcated
423 a watershed. Re-occupation was en masse, for during the first year 95 com-
munities (i.e. probably between 1,300 and 1,400 *bilek* families) established
themselves in the Baleh and its side streams. Then, as now, there was no detailed

[1] "Sarawak Gazette," 1924, p. 22.
[2] "Sarawak Gazette," 1924, p. 93 and p. 198.
[3] "Sarawak Gazette," 1924, p. 22.

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

726 sistance, and to make slaves of the rest. The Malay fleet consisted of a large number of long war-boats, or *prahus*, each about ninety or more feet long, and carrying a brass gun in the bows, the pirates being armed with swords and spears and muskets. Each boat was paddled by from sixty to eighty men. These terrible craft skulked about in the sheltered coves waiting for their prey, and attacked merchant vessels making the passage between China and Singapore. These piratical raids were often made with the secret sanction of the native rulers, who obtained a share of the spoil as the price of their connivance.

The Dyaks of Saribas and Skrang and the Balaus gladly joined the Malays in these expeditions, not only for the sake of obtaining booty, but because they could thus indulge in their favourite pursuit, and gain glory for themselves by bringing home human heads to decorate their houses with. The Dyak *bangkongs* were long boats capable of holding as many as eighty men. They often had a flat roof, from which the warriors fought, while their comrades paddled below.

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●175 648 Both the piracy and the terrible custom of head-hunting were put down by Sir James Brooke. The romantic story of how he came to be the first Rajah of Sarawak may here be briefly recalled.

James Brooke was born on April 29, 1803. His father was a member of the Civil Service of the East India Company, and spent a great many years in India. Following in his father's footsteps, he entered the Company's service, and was sent out to India in 1825. Not long after his arrival he was put in command of a regiment of soldiers, and ordered to Burmah, where he took part in the Burmese War; and, being dangerously wounded in

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

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an engagement, was compelled to return home on furlough. For over four years his health prevented him from rejoining his regiment, and when at last he started, the voyage out was so protracted, through a shipwreck and other misfortunes, that his furlough had expired before he was able to reach his destination. His appointment consequently lapsed, and he quitted the service in 1830.

In that same year he made a voyage to China, and was struck by the natural beauty and fertility of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, and horrified with the savagery of the tribes inhabiting them, who were continually at war with one another, and engaged in a monstrous system of piracy. He conceived the grand idea of rescuing them from barbarism, and of extirpating piracy in the Eastern Archipelago.

On the death of his father he inherited the sum of £30,000, and found himself in a position to carry out his schemes. He bought and equipped a yacht, the *Royalist*, and for three years he cruised about, chiefly in the Mediterranean, training his crew of twenty men for the arduous work that lay before them.

On October 27, 1838, he sailed from the Thames on his great adventure, travelled slowly on the long journey round the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived in Singapore in 1839. Here he met a shipwrecked crew, who had lately come from Borneo. They said they had been kindly treated by Muda Hassim—a native Rajah in Borneo—and they asked Mr. James Brooke to take presents and letters of thanks to him, if he should be going thither in his yacht. Mr. Brooke had not decided which of the many islands of the Eastern Archipelago he would visit, and he was as ready to go to Borneo as to

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

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any other; so, setting sail, he made his way up the Sarawak River, and anchored off Kuching on August 15, 1839. The country was nominally under the rule of the Sultan of Brunei, but his uncle, Rajah Muda Hassim, was then the greatest power in the island. As he was favourable to English strangers, Mr. Brooke paid him the customary homage, and was favourably received, and given full licence to visit the Dyaks of Lundu. The Rajah was at this time engaged in war with several fierce Dyak tribes in the province of Sarawak, who had revolted against the Sultan; but his efforts to quell this rebellion were ineffectual. The absolute worthlessness of the native troops under his command, and his own weakness of character, induced him to cling to Mr. Brooke, in whom he recognized a born leader of men, and he appealed for his help in putting down the insurgents, and implored him not to leave him a prey to his enemies. The Rajah even offered to transfer the government of the province to Brooke if he would remain and take command. This offer he felt bound at the time to decline, but it led to his obtaining a position of authority at Sarawak, useful for the purposes of trade.

With James Brooke's help the rebellion, which the Malay forces were too feeble to subdue, was effectually stayed. The insurgents were defeated in a battle in which Brooke, with the crew of his yacht and some Malay followers, took part. For his services on this occasion Muda Hassim conferred on him the title of Rajah of Sarawak, and this was the first step towards that larger sovereignty which he afterwards acquired. Some time elapsed, however, before the Sultan of Brunei could be induced to confirm the title. Mr. Brooke at once took vigorous action, making many reforms and introducing

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

a system of administration far superior to any that the native authorities had ever dreamed of; and in September, 1841, the government of Sarawak and its dependencies was formally made over to him. In the following year the Sultan of Brunei confirmed what Rajah Muda Hassim had done, on the condition that the religion of the Mohammedans of the country should be respected.

And now Rajah Brooke found himself in a position of authority which enabled him to bring all his administrative powers into operation. He saw clearly that the development of commerce would be the most effective means of civilizing the natives, and to make this possible it was necessary to suppress the hideous piracy which was not only a curse to the savage tribes, appealing as it did to their worst instincts, but a standing danger to both European and native traders in those seas.

In the suppression of piracy James Brooke found a vigorous ally in Captain (afterwards Admiral) Keppel, who, in command of H.M.S. *Dido*, was summoned from the China station in 1843 for this service. Various expeditions were organized and sent out against the marauders, the story of which has been told by himself. The pirates were attacked in their strongholds by Captain Keppel and other commanders of British ships. They fought desperately, and the slaughter was immense. The pirate crews found the entrances to the rivers blocked up by English gunboats, and their retreat cut off. These strenuous measures soon cleared the seas.

The practice of head-hunting was also dealt with by Sir James Brooke. He declared it to be a crime punishable with death, and by his rigorous treatment of head-hunting parties he gave the deathblow to this horrible national custom.

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

28 SARAWAK—SIR JAMES BROOKE

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After his strenuous life in Sarawak, Sir James Brooke had a great desire to visit England. Besides other reasons, the wish to see his relatives and friends, he felt he could effect more for the inhabitants of Borneo by a personal interview with Government Ministers in England than by correspondence. He left Sarawak, and reached England early in October, 1847. There honours awaited him. He was presented with the freedom of the City of London; Oxford University conferred upon him the degree of LL.D.; he was graciously received at Windsor by the Queen and the Prince Consort. The British Government recognized the work he had done, and appointed him Governor of Labuan and Commissioner and Consul-General in Borneo, and made him a K.C.B. The warrant of investiture was issued by Her Majesty on May 22, 1848.

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The extirpation of piracy was the first step towards introducing into the country the blessings of a settled government, with all its civilizing influences. But he was not satisfied with this, and soon began to take measures for the establishment of a Christian Mission in Sarawak. When Sir James Brooke visited England in 1847, he appealed to the Church, and especially to the two Universities, to come to his aid. Neither of the two great missionary societies was able at the time to undertake this new enterprise through lack of funds, and a new organization, the "Borneo Church Mission," was founded, which laboured in the island for a few years. Then, in 1854, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was able to take up the work, and has ever since been responsible for it. The original organization had, however, done well in the choice of the missionaries it sent out, the first of whom was the Rev. F. T. McDougall,

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

who was consecrated Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak in 1855.

My father, the Rev. W. H. Gomes, B.D., worked under Bishop McDougall as a missionary among the Dyaks of Lundu from 1852 to 1867, and I myself have worked, under Bishop Hose, as a missionary in Sarawak, for seventeen years, and have thus gained an intimate knowledge of the people and of their lives, now so rapidly changing under Western influence.

Sir James Brooke was a man of the highest personal character. That a young English officer, with a fortune of his own, should have been willing to devote his whole life to improving the condition of the Dyaks was a grand thing. That he should have been able, by perfectly legitimate means, to do this in the teeth of much official and other opposition; that he should have been able to put down piracy and head-hunting, with their unspeakable accompaniments of misery and cruelty, and to do it all with the hearty good-will of the people under his rule,—this was indeed an achievement which might have seemed hardly possible.

The present Rajah of Sarawak, Sir Charles Brooke, is a nephew of the first Rajah. He joined his uncle in 1852, when he held the rank of lieutenant in the British navy. For ten years he played an important part in the arduous work of punishing rebels and establishing a sound government. In 1857, when the Chinese insurrection broke out, it was his action that led to the punishment of the insurgents and the restoration of peace. In 1863, on the retirement of the first Rajah, he assumed control of the country, and five years later, on the death of his predecessor, he became Rajah of Sarawak. Ever since he became the responsible ruler of the country,

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

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Sarawak has advanced steadily, and made great moral and material progress. To the general public the first Rajah will always appear the romantic, heroic figure; but, while yielding full measure of praise and admiration to the work of a great man, those who know the country will, I think, agree with me that the heavier burden of working steadily and unwearyingly, when the romance of novelty had worn off, has been borne by his successor. With talents not less than those of his illustrious uncle he has carried out, in the face of disappointments and the most serious obstacles, a policy of regeneration for which the striking exploits of Sir James Brooke merely paved the way.

His work is well summarized by himself in an address to the *Kunsil Negri* (the Council of the Country) in 1891. He said he might divide his term of service of thirty-nine years into three periods of thirteen years each. The first period had been almost wholly spent in the work of suppressing head-hunting among the Dyaks. It involved frequent expeditions against rebellious Dyaks, much hard travelling by river and by land, and a constant watch against subtle enemies. The second period had been divided between occasional expeditions of the same nature and the establishment of trade and peaceful pursuits, and the giving and amending of laws as need arose. The last period had almost entirely been taken up with attending to the political and social affairs of a settled and peaceful community. Those present, who had been young with himself in the early days of his service, had been of great assistance to him, and had carried through the work set them, rough and perilous in the extreme, in mountainous region of jungle, and on treacherous, rapid-flowing rivers, subject to every kind of exposure;

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

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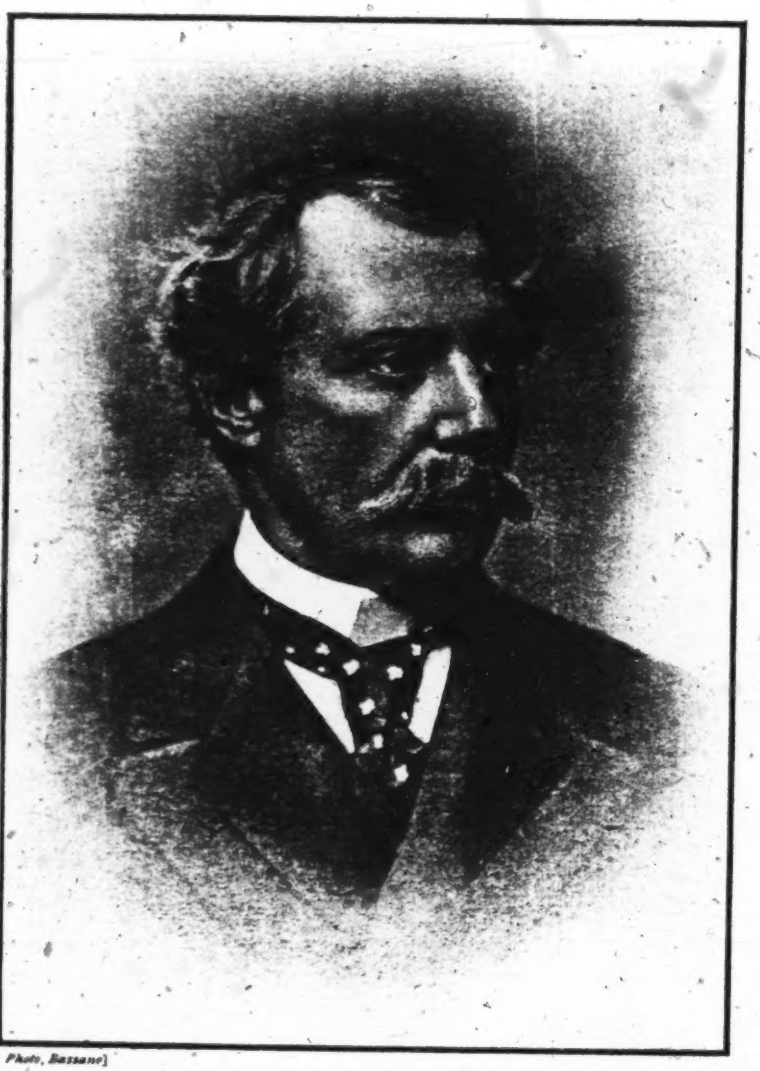

Photo, Bassano]

SIR CHARLES BROOKE, G.C.M.G., THE PRESENT RAJAH OF SARAWAK

[facing p. 30]

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

but now these hardships were no more required, and that was well, for both they and himself were growing old. The character of his task and theirs was changed: he and his old comrades, who had faced so many dangers together on river and in jungle, could now sit down comfortably and attend to the political business and the commercial progress of the country.

To these three periods the Rajah has since added a fourth, and that the longest of all, during which, as occasion served, a great deal has been done to extinguish the lingering sparks of intertribal hostility. There are occasional outbreaks among the Dyaks of the interior, and head-hunting still survives where natives think there is a chance of escaping detection and consequent punishment. But, happily, these are getting more and more rare, and do not affect the prosperity or trade of the country.

The method employed by the present Rajah to suppress head-hunting is best described in his own words:

"As soon as ever one of these parties started, or even listened to birds of omen preparatory to moving, a party was immediately despatched by Government to endeavour to cut them off, and to fine them heavily on their return; or, in the event of their bringing heads, to demand the delivery up of them, and the payment of a fine into the bargain. This was the steady and unflinching work of years, but before many months were over my stock of heads became numerous, and the fines considerable. Some refused to pay or follow the directions of the Government. These were declared enemies, and had their houses burnt down forthwith, and the people who followed me to do the work would be the Dyaks of some other branch-tribe on the same river."

The natives of Sarawak owe much to the Brookes.

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6

Sea Dayak Diet: A Longhouse Survey

by

P. W. BEDFORD, B.SC., M.B., CH.B.

During the last two and a half years I have carried out several tours of Sea Dayak areas in the Second Division visiting three or four houses each day. It was soon realised that such tours furnished only very superficial information regarding the general level of health and nutrition of these people and the prevalence of disease from which they suffer. The present study was undertaken to enquire into these questions more closely.

Rumah Bujak at Nanga Pruan was chosen for the study. The reasons for this were its proximity to Simanggang and the fact that this house is fortunate in having a very active, enterprising headman so that willing co-operation from the people of the longhouse was to be expected throughout the period of study.

From the 2nd February to the 29th November, 1958, the longhouse was visited every Saturday or Sunday by a team usually comprising the Divisional Medical Officer, a hospital assistant, laboratory technician, one or more hospital attendants and one or more trained *ulu* dressers. Sick people were examined each week, either treated on the spot or sent to Simanggang for outpatient or inpatient treatment as indicated. In addition the investigations to be described below were carried out during these weekly visits.

Rumah Bujak, Pruan

Before presenting the results of the study a brief description will be given of the longhouse and the way of life of the people who live in it.

The people of Rumah Bujak come originally from Sungai Pinggai on the Undup River. The Undup is a moderately large left branch of the Batang Lupar, the mouth of which is about twenty minutes' journey by outboard upriver from Simanggang. Sungai Pinggai is a further three hours' journey up the Undup by outboard.

17:Bedford D-5 (1958) 1959 OC6 Iban OC6
Rumah Bujak

175 During the occupation the Japanese cut a channel through [132] the narrow waist of a *tanjong* downriver from Simanggang. As a consequence water was diverted from a large loop of the river which dried out leaving an area of very fertile padi land. The people of Rumah Bujak settled on this land in 1943.

[423] After the occupation disputes arose regarding right of tenure of land on which the people of Rumah Bujak had settled. Several legal actions arose, as a result of which the people of Rumah Bujak were allowed to remain where they were. They also retain the rubber gardens at the site of their old house at Sungai Pinggai.

342 The present house was built in 1946. Several *langkaus* (temporary dwellings) were built alongside the house in 1955.

The original house built at Pruan contained 19 doors. Since its completion 11 *langkaus* have been built at the ends of the original longhouse.

162 The population of the longhouse was 169 at the start of the 621 investigation. During the period of investigation there were five births and one death. The death was that of a monster shortly 165 after birth, following a pregnancy complicated by hydramnios.

361 The house is built on low-lying tidal swamp. On two or three days each month the ground under and about the house is 356 flooded at high tide. The rooms are small, dark and hot. Some are kept moderately clean but some are very dirty. The majority 342 of rooms have separate kitchens.

231 Animals and poultry are reared under the house. The ground underneath and around the house is liberally strewn with 364 rubbish of all descriptions. There is no formal system of sewage 514 disposal. The occupants of the house defaecate and micturate through holes in the verandah and at the rear of the rooms in the time honoured fashion. Faeces are devoured by pigs and [231] poultry.

Agriculture

241 The people of Rumah Bujak own extremely fertile swamp 493 padi land. They grow sufficient rice for their own needs and

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OCb Iban OC6 Sibu

121 found them twenty years ago, the Ibans of the Sibu District have
177 accommodated to numerous influences that have been introduced to them, and especially within the past twenty years.

175 The movement of the Ibans into this district has occurred within
166 the past 125 years. When James Brooke arrived in Sarawak, the movements
177 of the Ibans into the southern tributaries of the Rejang were just beginning. Entering from the south, they soon invaded the land north of the Rejang, driving out or subduing and assimilating the former inhabitants.

In his program of pacification, James Brooke established Fort Brooke in 1862 at the point of the division of the Rejang and Igan Rivers.
[439] Under the protection of the fort, the point soon became a nexus for trade between Chinese, Ibans, Malays, Melanaus and others. From the beginning of the center, Ibans have both served and been served by the trade carried on there.

361 Today, few Ibans in the district live more than two hours travel
177 from the town which is accessible to them by private boats, public launches and ferries, cars, taxis and buses. Their adaptation has been influenced by the development of the town as an administrative center, entrepot, and by acculturation to the values mediated through residents and visitors.

18:Sublive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

177 439 was derived first from jungle produce, then rubber, and more recently, timber. Jungle produce provided the main source of income up until about 1910, when rubber took over until about 1964 when its primacy was supplanted by timber. Jungle produce and rubber continue to contribute to the economy of indigenes and Chinese, but during the past two decades Sibu's take-off has been based on the exploitation of timber.

1. Jungle Produce

176 439 314 For centuries the people of Borneo supplied mixed forest produce - rhinoceros horns for their alleged aphrodisiac qualities, kingfisher feathers, bezoar stones, damar (resin), camphor from the Borneo camphor tree, and casques of the helmeted hornbill, once more valuable than jade - to Chinese traders who brought beads, iron, crockery and the enormous earthenware jars (tajau) found as heirlooms in every longhouse. Chinese and Malay merchants penetrated the Rejang Valley long before permanent settlements were built, for this region had an abundance of the forest treasures, wanting only for collection.[7]

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[7] On the treasures of the Rejang forests, the Ranee Margaret wrote: ". . .The Chinese are supposed to have been the first to discover camphor, and Sibu bazaar is one of the principal ports for it in Sarawak. . . The Rejang River is rich in many articles of export; indiarubber, gutta-percha, beeswax, mats, ebony, beads, and geliga or bezoar stones, the latter being found in the stomach of three species of monkeys." (1913-255).

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

175 439 314 [484] [354] The jungle products originally were collected by the various indigenous groups of the interior, and the collection still is largely confined to these groups. These goods were traded or bartered with Malays and Chinese for salt, cloth, iron and luxury items at coastal stations and were related to the tradition of bejalai or the adventur- [177] ous status-validating trips of the Iban male. After the introduction of money, the sale of such products was important to the indigenes because it was the single way they had of obtaining hard cash, a value quickly accepted by them. Thus there developed a symbiotic relationship between the Ibans and other indigenes who supplied the forest products, the Chinese and, to a lesser extent, the Malays, who supplied essential items such as salt, iron, and cloth, and luxury goods.

000 Similarly, the outstations of the Brooke administration were largely dependent upon revenue derived from duties on the export of jungle products. The outstations were expected to be self-supporting and to contribute towards the support of the central administration in Kuching, and it is no overstatement that the Brooke Raj was supported from this export trade.

The earliest readily available reports on trade are for 1871, when Sarawak included the territory from Tanjong Datu to Tanjong

314 "a good nut-year is a great event in Sarawak and provides a literal windfall for the native tribes,"

439 and, it should be added, for the Chinese shopkeepers, for the "windfall" quickly ends up with the Chinese merchants who have staked the illipe nut gatherers and collect their loans, or purchase the nuts while selling outboard motors, sewing machines, gold and other valuables to the Ibans.[12]

423 439 Sarawak abounds in fruits, and the trees are held under customary rights. Ibans and other indigenous groups collect the fruits when they bear, and either sell them to Chinese hawkers or bring them to town to sell. We will give more attention to this in Chapter Four.

2. Rubber

175 177 249 Para rubber (Hevea brasiliensis) was first introduced into Sarawak in 1882 when Bishop Charles Hose planted one seedling in Kuching.

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314 243 [12] The relative abundance of forest products and especially illipe nuts when they are bearing has been a significant factor in the casualness with which many indigenese approach rice-cultivation. Prior to the planting of rubber and pepper in this District, men took off to collect jungle produce in the period between planting and harvesting rice. Bailey described how Malays in the Lingga area gave up rice-cultivation for collecting and fishing, finding the task easier and more pleasant (SG 2 June, No. 437, 1902). Sometimes rice has been neglected to the extent that crops are lost, as one Resident complained: "What I feared might happen has come to pass, the padi having been deserted by the Dyaks for the easily collected and remunerative engkabang crop, with the result that the majority of the Dyaks are short of rice and will have to obtain their supplies from other sources. They have plenty of money and will be able to obtain supplies. . . "SG 1 August, No. 839, 1923). Critics of Ibans who favor collecting over rice-cultivation fail to note that the rewards of the former are much more certain at the times when produce is available.

A, A [Sarawak Gazette--Analyst]

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OCo Iban OCo Sibu

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The potential of para rubber went unrecognized until about the turn of the century when the Rajah, foreseeing the economic importance of the new exotic, established Experimental Rubber Plantations at Segu and Satap in the First Division. By 1908, 15,000 seeds were obtained at Segu and 44,000 at Satap. Eighteen thousand of these seeds were sent to Sibu.

Experiments in rubber planting had been carried out in the Sibu area from the first years of this century. Pengulu Dalam Munan, a famous Iban war-leader, had planted a garden of the local getah rian (Isonandra gutta) with which the Government also was experimenting at that time (SG 448, 2 May, 1903). According to one of the early settlers of Sibu, Ling Wen Tsung, para rubber was introduced into the Sibu area by Wong Ging Huo, a Methodist minister who brought rubber seedlings to Sarawak after an Annual Conference in Singapore.[13] Wong's trees were producing by 1911, when the price of rubber was "700 dollars per picul," according to Ling.[14] Altogether, Wong planted 3,000 trees at Sungai Nawah and shortly thereafter, Kuo Yek Tiok planted 1,000 trees at Ensurai.

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[13] "In Singapore he saw rubber seedlings used for the Malayan industry, costing 700 dollars per picul. So he went to Malaya and bought some seeds. He brought the rubber seeds in a particular way. He put the seeds in a box filled with coal ash and placed the rubber seeds in the ashes. In this way he brought them to Kuching and Sibu and after a journey lasting about five weeks all the seeds became plants." (Ling 1966-28).

[14] Ling writes: "He made so much that he could not carry all the coins home. This led others to follow his example as they said, 'rubber trees make money'" (ibid.).

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 0C6 Iban 0C6
Sibu

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The Ibans were quick to take up rubber planting and, encouraged by boom prices in 1910, engaged in planting gardens along the Batang Rajang, Batang Leba'an and Batang Igan, as well as on land off a number of tributaries. By the mid-1920's, more than 100,000 acres of rubber had been planted in Sarawak, and when the Great Depression ushered in the era of restriction,[15] the total area devoted to rubber exceeded 220,000 acres.

Rubber planting in Sarawak was done on small-holdings by Chinese and indigenous farmers. Charles Brooke adamantly refused to permit the development of rubber estates by outsiders and in an editorial of 1970[A] wrote:

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> "Rich companies pay their managers ruinous salaries and no doubt will soon make use of manuers which are always dangerous in being liable to germinate insects and vermin which often cause disease and failure in the trees and crop. Sarawak would be more satisfied with a more gradual development, with less capital expended and smaller losses in the case of failure."

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[656] [15] State-wide tapping holidays were ordered every fourth month according to terms of the International Rubber Regulation Agreement of 1934, which Sarawak joined under considerable pressure from the British Colonial Office. This method of restriction was not effective and a "coupon system" was introduced in 1937, under which each owner was given coupons entitling him to market a specified amount of rubber, dependent on the size of his holding.

[A] [The author presumably means 1870--Analyst]

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

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The Second Rajah permitted the Borneo Company to develop the Dahan Estate in 1902, and the Sungai Tengah Estate in 1907, but these were the exceptions.[16] His general policy on cultivation was expressed in a Gazette editorial of 1910, in which he wrote:

> "The object of the Sarawak Government is to develop the cultivation of the land for the good of the inhabitants in order that they may have the profits and benefit in the possession of such gardens as an inheritance or pesaka to their descendants - and this object would not be achieved or realized unless the plantations were protected and strictly prohibited from falling into the hands of the richer and more speculative class of the white races."

The effects of the Second Rajah's policy of encouraging smallholder's production of rubber were many and far-reaching. In the first place, the time when experimentation in rubber planting was taking place coincided with the arrival and first decade of struggle of the Chinese settlers on the Rejang. Although the Chinese were brought to Sarawak at the beginning of the century for the express purpose of growing rice, their initial failures in that crop vis-a-vis the soaring prices of rubber strongly influenced their decisions to plant rubber rather than rice. In the early 1920's, when the prices of rubber

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[16] The Borneo Company was the only important European firm in Sarawak from the time of its founding in 1856 until the opening of the Miri oil-fields by a subsidiary of Shell in 1909, and enjoyed a special position and played a mutually supportive role with the Brookes. Charles Brooke did not want European companies or planters in Sarawak because they would have threatened his position of absolute monarch. He preferred to see "a more gradual development, with less capital expended" in Sarawak for fear of the undermining of his position.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OCs Ibm OC6
Sibu

dropped, Chinese and others stopped tapping and took up rice cultivation, an alternative which, along with others, has been exploited whenever rubber prices have been low.

The alternative which rubber production offered to small-holders has been one factor[17] which has prevented Sarawak's achievement of self-sufficiency in rice production. As early as 1926, the competition between rubber and rice for the planters energies were well recognized. In a perceptive article, the editors of the Gazette describe the drop in rice production, attributable in part to investment of time and energies in rubber production. The editors write;

> "Perusal of the interesting Annual Report of the Department of Trade and Customs for the year 1925 reveals facts which lead one furiously to think.
>
> "To quote the Report, 'rice imports show a further increase of 50,000 piculs valued at $440,000. The following figures, showing the importation of this staple food, are significant: -
>
> 1922 . . 132,291 piculs . . $ 903,899
> 1923 . . 224,247 piculs . . 1,523,710
> 1924 . . 273,003 piculs . . 2,179,827
> 1925 . . 323,220 piculs . . 2,620.852

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[17] Others include the poor soils, erratic rainfall, techniques, pests, inconsistent use of fertilizers, and often casual attitude towards weeding and guarding a rice crop in the period between planting and harvesting.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

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"'. . . These figures are not wholly attributable to failure of crops of increase of immigration, but largely due to partial or complete abandonment of their farming life by large sections of the natives of the country in favour of rubber planting. . .'"

"'. . . So long as it pays the natives better to plant rubber and buy their rice, they will naturally prefer to do less hard work on their padi farms than in previous years.'"

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In addition to making rubber production a viable economic alternative to small holders, the Rajah's policy was influential on the patterns of movement of the shifting Iban cultivators. By making it possible and encouraging each family to plant its own rubber estate, rather than allowing companies to plant large gardens to be worked either by plantation workers living in company quarters, as in Sumatra, or commuting, as in parts of Malaya, the Rajah made ownership of real property and interests therein a new fact in Iban adaptation. In contrast to the high degree of mobility characteristic of shifting cultivators, owners of rubber gardens are more sedentary, residing in proximity to the trees they tap daily. As one informant said, Kaki kami nyau lekat tegal getah ("Our feet were stuck because of rubber,"

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Anyau Bakit, 16 September, 1969. In some areas, for example, Bawang Assan, Ibans built permanent longhouses for the first time as they planted their rubber gardens. The eight-door rumah papan built close to the present-day site of Rumah Riang, was a novelty because of its

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
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175 permanence and because it was the first longhouse in memory built of
249 planks.[18] In other areas, for example Oya Road and specifically
361
342 Rumah Tindit and Rumah Meruan, the advent of rubber has been influential
177 in the fragmentation of longhouses which have been abandoned as individual families moved away to be nearer to their gardens.[19]

249 Adaptation to rubber production was a shift in the value
177 system and social structure of the Iban community. For, whereas pre-
554 viously successful rice cultivation was a requisite for any Iban male
556 seeking recognition and upward mobility, rubber planting opened a new way to wealth and acquisition of economic security, so much desired
243 and a sure sign of the blessings of the gods. The conflict between
249 the traditional padiculture and rubber growing was expressed in a
539 wide-spread story that rubber ate rice.[20] According to one version,

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[18] Owing to the practice of shifting cultivation, longhouses were impermanent structures, built of softwood posts, split bamboo floors, bark walls and thatched roofs, according to several informants (Unchat Chok, Tuai Rumah Gaong).

[19] The ceremonial importance of the longhouse continues and
[796] bilik - families return occasionally for gawai and other ritual activities.

[20] Pringle describes a similar story among the Saribas Ibans
[114] (1970-203), Freeman among the Balleh Ibans (1955-105), and Geddes among the Land Dayaks.

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"Aing of Telok Bulat, Binatang, put his padi out to dry on a mat on the tanju', and went off to his farm. When he returned, the rice was all gone - not a kernel was left. The next day, the same thing happened. As there was no strong wind on either day, Aing was suspicious, andon the third day, sneaked around to the back of his house and up into the sedau from where he could keep an eye on his rice. He noticed a slight movement and saw the branches of a rubber tree bending toward the rice, closer and closer, until the rubber leaves - notice, they are shaped like a naga (dragon) - ate the rice."

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As a result of the story and other cultural pressures, an unknown number of Ibans cut their rubber trees down, a move that they were to regret later. Those who refused to destroy their rubber trees, such as the fathers of Unchat Chok and Jonathan Bangau, prominent Iban businessmen in Sibu, reaped large profits during the periods when prices were high and through wise investment (well-advised by Chinese friends) became wealthy.[21]

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Another far-reaching effect of the Rajah's policy on rubber was the development of a state-wide trading network to handle the exportation of rubber, involving Ibans, Chinese, Malays and others in production and, until recently, principally Chinese in the position of middlemen. Until 1964, when it was displaced by timber, rubber was Sarawak's chief export product for almost thirty years, and the network

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[21] Chok Apai Unchat was a close friend of Wong father of Mr. Wong Soon Kai, a Sibu-born surgeon, and through the elder Wong's advice bought a shophouse on Island Road that is now the property of his son.

175 develop to transmit the rubber from the planters to the major exporters.
177 Until the take-off in the timber trade, the importing of foodstuffs,
439 cloth, ironwares, outboard motors and numerous other goods, and the exporting of rubber may be described as the backbone of the State's economy, necessary to the rise of trading classes among the Chinese, Malays and Ibans,[22] to State revenue, and to capital accumulations which later permitted investment in heavy equipment for the exploitation of Sarawak's major natural resource-timer.

439 T'ien, writing on the nature of this trade network which emerged
441 to handle rubber and foodstuffs states that,
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> "grocery import and rubber import[A] may, indeed, be regarded as obverse and reverse of one process. The system of credit which keeps the rural economy going depends. . . on the exchange of rubber for daily provisions. The rural grocery shops have a double function: as distributors of provisions and as collectors of rural produce, especially rubber. The urban grocery shops also play a double, or rather triple, role: they retail goods to urban customers, but they are also the sources from which the rural grocers obtain their stocks, and at the same time, middlemen between rural shops and exporters in the rubber trade."

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22. "Without exported rubber and imported groceries almost the whole of the Chinese population of the Colony would exist only at the level of subsistence agriculture. . . " (T'ien 1956-54). Similarly, the traders of other ethnic groups.

A [Presumably the author means "export"--Analyst]

443 As stated above, until recently most of the middlemen in the
463 trade network were Chinese. Within the past decade or so, however,
177 an increasing number of Ibans have opened village shops, some quite
[439] successfully. The shopkeepers in rural areas who have been able to make a go of their businesses have been those who have not depended on trade alone but with their families have continued to grow rice, to assure their self-sufficiency, and to tap rubber, to have an additional source of income besides that from the shop. The shopkeepers who have looked to trade alone have invariably failed, for the rural traffic in rubber and foodstuffs is inadequate to carry full-time traders.

175 The history of rubber trading may be described most easily as
648 extremely variable. This is due to several reasons. First, the local
314 trade is part of the world market, and activities are correlative with going market prices. At times when there has been a great demand for rubber on the world market, trees have been tapped frenetically, latex molded and pressed into sheets, and rushed to the shops. When prices have dropped, tapping declines correspondingly. For example, in the peak years immediately following the First World War, the price on para went to $100 per picul in 1919, only to drop $15 by 1921 owing to a glut. Rubber tapping stopped temporarily. Again, in 1947, no rubber was to be found in the Sibu pasar because of the low price it was

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bringing. One year later, 22,000 piculs were exported from Sibu in the one month of November, 1948, and in 1950, Government reports complained of the problems of recruiting labor and predicted the failure of rice crops that were neglected by planters taking advantage of the rubber boom. At present, many Ibans are hiring out as coolies for two to three dollars a day rather than tap rubber which is bringing about $45 per picul.[23] When prices are up, rubber is tapped. When it is more profitable to engage in other activities, rubber is left alone.

Another reason why the local trade is variable is the erratic rainfall which has been described (pages 15-19). Rainfall at night or in the early morning makes rubber tapping impossible, and during months of heavy rain the production of rubber drops appreciably.

In addition to rainfall and fluctuating prices, another reason for variations in the rubber trade is the seasonal activities of rice

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[23] The "Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Third Division, Upper Rejang, For the Year 1970," contains the following indictment: "Due to the decline in prices down to the 50's the exports of rubber from Sibu and presumably the production went down three fold as compared to 1969. Many small holders have stopped tapping their trees and (are) turning elsewhere for their livelihood. This short sighted policy on the part of our farmers is a definite drawback as it hampers the Government's efforts to stabilise the rubber market." (pages 13-14). The small holder, however, has no alternative other than exploiting the part(s) of his environment which offers the greatest rewards at any one time.

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174 own intra-ethnic conflicts. The Iban's value of headhunting among
648 enemies found expression, and the Malay chiefs were able to secure their positions through the followings they built up.

Thus, the invasion of the Rejang area in general, but Sibu in particular, opened new lands not only to the Ibans, but also to the Malays. Seeking to keep their heads, while taking advantage of the riches of the virgin Rejang territory, the Malays entered and built settlements, continued their trade for jungle produce and rice in exchange for salt and fish.[7]

C. The Ibans

175 Apart from the arrival and establishment of the Brooke Raj,
648 the Iban migrations of the nineteenth century were the most important
166 events of that century. While the migrations doubtlessly would have occurred without the Brookes, the migrations were influenced in a number of respects by Brooke government and were influential in the development of Government policies.

175 Because of the lack of historical data, the length of time in-
166 volved, and the numerous rivers and streams in Sarawak, the migrations tend to be confusing and the factors involved in them complex when dis-

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[608] [7] Fraternal relations still exist among Malays and Ibans, and when the latter are asked, Sapa ke udong nuan ("Who is your (ritual or trading)brother?" the answer almost always is, Orang Melayu, "A Malay."

175 cernible. At the opening of the nineteenth century, the Ibans were
166 largely living in the upriver areas of the Batang Lupar and Batang
[167] Saribas and their tributaries in the Second Division. They had migrated from the Kapuas headwaters in Kalimantan across the watershed into Sarawak territory some time earlier. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, groups of Iban families had begun to penetrate the headwaters of the Katibas (Freeman 1955-11-20) and the Sarikei (Cooper 1966-23), and by 1850, they had reached the vicinity of the Rejang.[8]

By the early 1830's other families from the Lemanak, Skrang and Layar had migrated to the Entabai and Julau valleys and the headwaters of the Kanowit River. Commenting on the presence of Ibans in the Kanowit, Charles Brooke wrote early in 1859,

> "This stream is inhabited by Sea Dayaks, who have for the last fifteen or twenty years been migrating from the Saribas and Skrang districts for the purpose of obtaining new farming grounds. These exoduses took place over-land between one river and another. Such parties would do their four or five days' march, then build their houses, and proceed to farm for one or two years, after which they would recommence their march, and so on, until they arrived at their final destination."

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[657] [8] Cooper writes that Sherip Masahor (1810-1890) "removed his headquarters to Sarikei, a small town on the river Rejang, and became very friendly with the Iban people living nearby" (1966-23). Sometime before the arrival of James Brooke, "Masahor took over the administration of the Rejang district for the Sultan of Brunei", indicating that the Ibans had reached the vicinity of the Rejang prior to Brooke's coming in 1841. (ibid.)

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[114] While Freeman is basically correct in his recognition of a two-pronged movement from the Second Division into the Rejang via the Katibas and Kanowit rivers, these were but two of the major avenues through which the Ibans moved. The migrations were not highly organized ventures involving hundreds of people, but were the gradual, continuous movements of people farming, hunting and gathering, then pressing on to new lands. Ibans from Saribas and the Krian moved to Sarikei and Binatang, and from there spread to other areas of the lower Rejang, Sibu and even to Song. Saribas Ibans also settled in parts of the Kanowit and its tributaries, especially the Julau. Skrang and Lemanak Ibans moved into the Kanowit, the former from there to Durin, the latter to the Poi and Ngemah tributaries of the Rejang and from the Poi to the Batang Igan below Sibu. Upon reaching the Rejang, the Ibans began the gradual ascent of other uninhabited tributaries, felling and clearing the jungles, until they reached the headwaters of the branches to the north as well as to the south.

These migrations have occurred within the past century and a half. At the time of publication of Ten Years in Sarawak by the Second Rajah in 1866, the Ibans had not migrated to the areas north or east of the Rejang. Within the past century, they have become the most numerous group in the Third Division and established in large numbers in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions.

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175 D. Factors Relating to Iban Migrations

166 In his discussions of the Iban migrations, Pringle writes that

> "the development of Iban 'piracy may be regarded as one symptom of a remarkable outburst of human energy which also led to the simultaneous commencement of Iban migration to the Third Division at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This expansion, both 'piratical' and territorial, could not have taken place without population growth, but it seems equally clear that it was linked to something other than demographic pressure."

On the same point, he writes:

> "It was also suggested that the further expansion of Iban settlement into the Rejang, which began not long before the First Rajah's arrival, was connected somehow with a more general florescence of Iban energies. This sudden ferment, the causes of which are unkown, also resulted in the simultaneous outbreak of Iban 'piracy' in the coastal waters of northwest Borneo."

Although admittedly there is much that must remain unkown, for want of information, about the factors and causes involved in the Iban migrations of the nineteenth century, nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence for us to make certain inferences that point to more than a "general florescence of Iban energies." On the basis of available data, we may suggest the following factors as contributing to these migrations.

1. Demographic Pressures

175 First, the Ibans were shifting cultivators facing demographic
166 pressures due to population growth. One element which continually has
161 kept the Ibans on the move has been their population increases in

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175 combination with generally poor soils and the techniques of shifting
166 cultivators. The estimate of 50,000 Ibans living in the Second
161 Division in the early nineteenth century does not seem excessive and, indeed, may be quite low in light of the present Iban population of 330,000, achieved with an increase of 1.7 per cent per annum.[9]

The Second Division is an area of 4,129 square miles, into [114] which the Ibans moved during the nineteenth century. A quick calculation reveals that the population density did not approach the figure of 46 persons per square mile, Freeman's estimate of the maximum number that could occupy an area for cultivation and allow the optimum fallow time of 12 years (1955-134, 136). But, Freeman's estimate does not take into consideration the fact that much land in Sarawak is not suitable for cultivation. As Lee notes:

> "Although the density for the country as a whole is still very low, there are areas in Sarawak where pressure of population on land resources is becoming acute. It must also be remembered that much of the empty areas of Sarawak will not have a large carrying capacity. The coastal peat-swamp forests and the inaccessible, hilly interior with only small patches of flat fertile and have little potential value for settlement and agriculture."

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[9] For references and discussion of early sources on Sarawak's population see J. L. Noakes, "The Growth of the Population of Sarawak," in L. W. Jones 1960-319-24.

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The Second Division, like all Divisions in Sarawak, contains a mixture of good and poor soils, of peat swamps and shale hills as well as more fertile land. And population increases and shorter periods of fallowing between cultivation, resulted in diminishing yields in some areas of the Second Division.

Population pressures were not only a physical but also a cultural phenomenon. The Ibans' desire for virgin jungle for hill rice farming has long been recognized. By the end of the nineteenth century, even after thousands of their peers had migrated to the Third Division and beyond, the Residents reported an increasing number of litigations over land.[10] Such disputes are rare where there still is plenty of unfelled jungle for the taking (cf. Freeman 1955-22), but most common in the Sibu District where land prices are highly inflated, and needless to say, there is no kampong lama' ("old jungle"). Confirming this point, one reliable source stated,

> "When our grandparents settled in this area, you could travel for a day or two (by dugout and paddle) before you came to another house. Now, you can't go even half-an-hour. When they came, there were no land disputes because land was plentiful. Now, there's no end of cases."

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[10] See Bailey's Reports, SG No. 406, 1 November 1899, and No. 451, 4 August 1903.

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2. Value of New Land

175 166 183 [484] [501] Implicit in the population pressures was a second factor, the obverse of the first, the Iban cultural value of new land. The Ibans are themost expansive and aggressive of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak. The institution of pejalai included, among other purposes such as the validation of the Iban male, the reconnitering of new lands and other people. In one account,[11] two brothers, ~~Baji~~ and Tagi', sons of Baring, on a pejalai from the Skrang, made a bark canoe (utap),[12] and travelled down the Kanowit. Coming out onto the broad expanse of the Rejang, they were astounded to find how flat the land was. They travelled as far as Bukit Lan below Sibu, then returned to bring their families to the land just waiting for the taking.

3. The Pioneer

175 166 554 [184] [423] A third factor, related to the migrations and high value of new land in Iban culture, was the traditional class system. More will be said of this ina a later chapter, but contrary to what Freeman has written about the Ibans of the Sut, the Ibans in the Sibu District had a well-developed class consciousness, which still obtains among them, particularly in the arrangement of marriages. During the nineteenth century, the pioneer (ke mubok menoa baru, "who opens up new land")

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[115] [11] Interview with Tuai Rumah Ampan, 16 November, 1970.

[12] Such craft are still occasionally made for trips from headwaters, and abandoned after a single trip.

195 166 554 423 thereby achieved distinction for himself and secured land-rights for his descendants. Land was power, and latecomers had to make requests for land from the descendants of the pioneers. The climb to the position of aristocrat (raja berani, "brave and rich") had to commence 173 166 555 with pioneering. The names of pioneers who opened up new territories are still remembered by their descendants,[13] as well as the feats they accomplished and their nom de guerre. In one account,

> "The first Ibans to move to Sarikei were led by Nuga (Who Cut Off The Rejand Tidal Bore) who settled at Sari'. When (Pengulu) Abas heard that Nuga was at Sari', he walked overland from Paku' to Selalang, and urged Nuga to cross the Rejang. 'We can't,' replied Nuga,' for the Beliun (Melanau), occupy that land, and we can't fight Tugau.' Nevertheless, at Abas' insistence, they crossed over and drove out the Melanaus, who scattered to Oya, Mukah, Balingian and Bintulu."[14]

The high degree of consonance between narratives related by informants in the Second and Third Divisions supports the credibility of

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[13] which tends to be confusing because of the plethora of names, but therein illustrates the abundance and independence of movements that took place. (Tuai Rumah Ampan, 23 October, 1970).

539 [14] Text: Ke mula mula ia Iban datai di Sarikai, Nuga, ensumbar ia, Mantap Bena Pangka Pasang, ke diau di Sari. Ninga Nuga udah di Sari, Abas bedarat ari Paku ka Selalang, ngumbok Nuga ngelayang Batang Rejang. Batang Rajang enda ulih dipelanggang laban di-uan Beliun, ko Nuga, lalu kitai enda te-alah ka Tugau. Tang, diumbok Abas, saduai ngalah ka Belium ka rari ngagai Oya, Mukah, Balingian enggau Bintulu.

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the accounts.[15] For example, two lemambang (bards), one from Bawang Assan, another from Song, independently supported the following accounts about famous pioneers to the Rejang:

> "Igoh apai Lamban came from the Ulu Layar to the Sarikei in search of new land. He had been a leading warrior... There was no quarrel in the Layar which forced him to migrate; he wanted to be a pioneer and to seek new lands (emphasis added).
>
> "At about the same time Mujah (Buah Raya) led the first migrations into the Ulu Julau, a branch of the Kanowit tributary of the Rejang. (Since other areas were already settled), Mujah kept on looking for new land, and thus came to Julau. Upon his arrival, he and his followers fought against the Rejangs, Tanjongs, Kanowits, Ukits and Lugats in many parts of the Rejang" (emphasis added)

4. Raiding and Headhunting

A fourth factor contributing either directly or indirectly to the migrations was the high value of raiding and headhunting, practiced by some but, it is important to note, not all, Ibans. Without imputing any causal relationship, those Ibans were shifting cultivators who practiced headhunting. The charter for headhunting was mythical in character, being contained in the instructions given by the spirit Puntang Raga to Serapoh: Ulit orang ke mati enda tau enda diketas enggau pala munsoh ("Mourning for the dead must be cut away with an enemy's head," Sandin 1962-12).

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[15] Particularly when they are quick to discredit one another whenever the opportunity arises.

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175 Living amidst or at the edge of other indigenous groups, the
648 Ibans were involved in a contest for the land. This does not imply that other land was not available, but that the other groups often hunted and gathered in areas that the Ibans found desirous for rice cultivation. With some people, for example, the Bukitans, the Ibans formed alliances, the Bukitans serving as guides to Ibans in new territories and eventually adopting rice cultivation and the longhouse
[727] organization from the Ibans (Freeman 1955-14-15). Other groups either were driven out by the Ibans, as in the case of the Melanaus, Punans, Ukits, Kayans and Sians (SG No. 288, 1890-13, 151, 194; 1904 No. 466, 211; 1919 No. 765, March 17; 1920, No. 798, 175), or were captured as ulun berani ("slaves of braves") and thereby assimilated in the lowest class of Iban society.

175 Headhunting was an integral part of the Iban grammar of values,
721 as Sandin makes abundantly clear in his discussion of the Gawai Antu
765 ("Feast of the Departed Spirits," SMJ 1963-321-326). In a Gawai Antu
183 observed by this author, the climax of the three-day celebration, costing an estimated M$30,000, came when two old braves who had taken human heads (ke bedengah) drank the sacred rice-wine (ai garong). Only two men were eligible to drink the ai garong at that feast, for they must have taken a human head. These men were accorded places of honor and
000 their deeds recounted in song. Since the termination of headhunting

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Since the termination of headhunting and the opening of military employment to Ibans as trackers with forces in Malaya, the Sarawak Rangers, or the Field Force, thousands of young Iban men have found it possible to fulfill their cultural expectations through participation in the military.

Another aspect of the migrations that was related to the raiding and headhunting activities of the Ibans was that some moved to escape the predatory activities of their own kind. For example, Ibans moved from the Lemanak because they were caught in the pincer-like movements of the Saribas and Skrang Ibans. One informant, commenting on the reason his people moved to Bawang Assan via Stras, Binatang, said,[16]

> "We were weary of being raided every year or two. We would harvest our rice and acquire a few things, only to be hit in a raid, and lose everything, if not our lives. So, we figured it was easier to move."

It is apparent from the above that not all Ibans participated in raiding and headhunting. These feats of bravery were carried out by bands of young braves (to use Sandin's word) at the expense of fellow Ibans or people of other groups.

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[16] Text: Kami nyau puas diserang tiap taun tauka dua tuan. Udah kami ngetau lalu bulih utai mimit, tak diserang, nyau semoa sebuti' nyawa kami enda. Nya alai, ko ati kami, nyamai agi pindah. (Anyau Bakit, interview, 15 September, 1969).

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5. "Big Men" among "big men"

175 166 648 A fifth factor contributing to the Iban migrations of the nineteenth century, one which must necessarily be discussed in some detail, was a deep resentment of the Brookes' paternalism and interference with traditional ways of life. The Ibans were oriented to a high degree of mobility and independence, and reacted to the invasions of their lives by an authoritarian government with the time-honored [184] reactions of fight and flight. Iban society has always been (and is) highly factionalized, and the leadership patterns show numerous parallels with the "big man" complex of Melanesia, as will be discussed below.

183 [562] [554] [304] Adapting as they did to an environment of relatively limited productivity in which they had to move every five or six years, the Ibans placed a premium on the achievements of the individual, especially the male: pejalai, pioneering, headhunting, success in farming, and tattooing (an ordeal in design to see whether a man could withstand physical pain),[17] among others.

592 We have mentioned the autonomy and independence of the bilik family, which produced and consumed its own food. On this point,

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[17] Several Iban men explaining why they were untattooed stated quite unashamedly that they couldn't stand the pain. Tattooing is done with five needles tied together, the points dipped in soot and driven under the skin. It is a rapidly disappearing form of art and type of ordeal.

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592 Freeman wrote,

[621]

> ". . .The unbroken expanse of roof tends to conceal the fact that the Iban long-house is fundamentally a series of discrete entities: the independent family units of a competitive and egalitarian (sic) society."

554 Oriented to the independence and achievement of the individual, and to the autonomy of the bilik family, and practicing shifting cultivation with little if any surplus, the Ibans supported no per-[624] manent leaders. Leaders (tuai) who were recognized were of an ad hoc nature such as the war leader (tuai serang), who ratified their positions [622] by their performances. The tuai rumah adjudicated disputes because of his knowledge of the history of settlements in his area and of adat [173] ("customary law"). The orang tau tusut was consulted when marriages [538] were arranged because of his knowledge of genealogies; the lemambang [756] ("bard") for various gawai was the repository of lore; and the manang ("shaman") for his ability to handle physical and psychical illnesses. But these and other officiants were in no sense chiefs, nor did they enjoy any power beyond that afforded by the recognition of their constituents.

175 During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, 555 the highest pangkat (status) that could be achieved by an Iban male was 624 raja berani. A man could achieve recognition as raja berani only through a fortuitous combination of pioneering, successful farming,

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activity as a brave warrior and advance guard (buloh balang), and, after building up a following, an outstanding career as a war leader. Lintong (war-name, Moa Hari, "Cloud" or "Face of the Day"), was recognized as raja berani, as was the late Pengulu Gani Apai Engkamat of Bawang Assan.[18] The descendants of these men still enjoy prestige and deference as offspring of raja berani.

The status of the raja berani parallels in several respects that of the Melanesian "big man."[19] Like the "big man," the raja berani was verbally persuasive. Fluency and cleverness of speech (landik bejako') are valued among the Ibans, and every successful leader at whatever level is an able speaker. Though a man may possess other admirable qualities and enjoy success in farming or business, if he cannot speak convincingly, any aspirations he may have for leadership are likely to go unrewarded.[20]

Again, as with the "big man," the raja berani were highly competitive. There is both resistance to any appearance of submission and reluctance to the surrender of his independence on the part of the

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[18] Pengulu Gani's obituray appeared in the local papers, and in such foreign papers as the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette when he died in 1959.

[19] The modern Iban counterpart is the local politican.

[20] In longhouses where the tuai rumah is a poor speaker, a deputy (mandai) who is an able speaker represents him in welcoming guests and in helping to handle disputes.

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175 555 624 Iban, making the acquisition of followers and accumulation of political capital most difficult for the leader. Yet, at the same time, the Iban is willing, even desirous, of giving his support to any leader from whom he anticipates rewards.[21] Aware of this, the raja berani built followings through promises of adventure, plunder (perepasan) and heads (antu pala'). Because of the fragile nature of ties between leaders and followers, the former constantly sought to re-inforce [157] their holds on their anembiak ("followers"). As Sahlins wrote of the "big man," so, too, the raja berani formerly (and his modern politician counterpart)

> "combines with an ostensible interest in the general welfare a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation. His gaze. . . is fixed unswervingly to the main chance.[22] His every public action is designed to make a competitive and invidious comparison with others, to show a standing above the masses that is produce of hisown manufacturing."

The competition to build and maintain a following exerted considerable pressure both on the raja berani as it does on the modern Iban

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[431 178] [21] Traditional leader-follower relations were built on exchange of loyalty for booty and heads. Present ones are based on kantau, gifts not infrequently of money.

[22] An ambitious young Iban, forced to choose between running for Council Negri and accepting the scholarship offered him to the United States, chose the latter, calculating the long-range gains to be greater. (1963-291).

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politician.[23] For Iban anembiak have always been quick to discredit a leader who abuses his privileges by neglecting them,[24] and equally quick to transfer their loyalties to another leader who may promise more or give rewards. The implications of this high degree of competition are ominous for the Ibans' ventures into modern politics, for

> "this fragmentation of true authority presents special political difficulties, particularly in organizing large masses of people for the prosecution of such collective ends as warfare or ceremony."

or enlisting support at the polls.[25]

The indicative quality of the raja berani, like the "big man," was personal power. He did not succeed to his office, but achieved his position, through bravery in war, mastery of oratorical style, farming prowess, all of which were demonstration of magical power and good fortune (tuah limpah), the aim of Iban prayers.

It was into this competitive and factionalized system of unstable political alliances that the Brookes came, as "Big Men" among "big men."

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[23] Cf. Leigh, 1970.

[24] Although well-known, the Iban Pesaka Party candidates in the Sibu District were defeated to a man in the election of 1970 for neglecting their constituents.

[25] The intramural conflicts and undercutting that has taken place between the Iban leaders of the Party Pesaka have divided the supporters and resulted in their disaffection. (ibid.).

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175 It is untrue to say that the Brookes created the factions, for divisions
648 are a part of Iban society at every level.[26] What occurred was an
184 alignment of factions, some against, some for the Brooke government as it tended to threaten or enhance their positions. Brooke policies of taxation and fines, restriction of migrations, suppression of raiding and headhunting, evoked bitter resentment and retaliations from
[55] those who aligned themselves against the Brooke government. For those who chose alignment with the new authority, the Brooke Raj represented an opportunity for external validation of their positions, and manipulation of their relations with the White Rajahs for personal advance and power. On this point, Pringle writes,

> "The more remote upriver people, loath to abandon their freedom to fight and migrate as they saw fit, often found it more agreeable to comprehend him (the Rajah) as an enemy, the greatest of all enemies, than they did to obey his commands. Even the more accessible downriver Ibans who followed the Rajah on expeditions, of whom Munan was a prominent example, instinctively tended to regard the Government as an antagonist."

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[665] [26] These are the causes of removals of bilik families and the break-up of whole longhouses, and the ease with which Iban politicians transfer party membership if they sense an advantage as an Independent or in another party. The situation quite literally is "every man for himself." (cf. Lande, 1965).

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175 651 Taxation in the form of exemption and door taxes was a point of severe vexation among the Ibans,[27] for the taxes symbolized the responsibility that the Ibans owed to the Brookes, a responsibility that was acknowledged begrudgingly if at all. Probably originating in the pre-Brooke era when Brunei-sanctioned chiefs collected tribute, the Iban door tax was set at one pasu[28] of padi per year. By 1870, the money equivalent of eighty cents could be paid in lieu of the pasu of padi. [669] By 1880, this was raised to one dollar. The payment of taxes as tribute to the Government or for exemption from military service was onerous to the Ibans, and misunderstanding over taxes was a prime factor in the Asun rebellion of the 1930's.[29]

175 648 166 Restrictions imposed by the Government on Iban migrations and the suppression of headhunting, in the Government's attempts to establish the Pax Brittania over all its wards, was another cause for unrest. Being shifting cultivators, the Ibans had moved at will and according to need into new areas which suited them for their farming. Although the Second

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[27] Ibans in the Sibu District have expressed ambivalent feelings about present-day taxes, chafing under the law that requires them to pay them, but exulting that they can claim free berau (even if they are not in need) because they have paid their taxes just like everyone else.

[804] [28] A dry measure of eight gantang, or 48 pounds of husked rice.

[29] The Brooke Raj was heavily dependent upon the "Dyak Revenue," which was reported as amounting to $26,276.18 and $27,318.36 in the years 1879-1880 (SG No. 174, April, 1881, p.29). cf. Pringle 1970-161n).

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175 Rajah dealt with the migrations with sympathy because of his under-
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166 standing of the needs for new land,

> "nevertheless, it would be fair to say that the Rajah and his officers expended far more time and effort in attempting to restrain Iban migrations that they did trying to promote it."

The Iban migrants to the Balleh were twice repulsed by Government, in the 1870's and in 1905, before they were permitted to settle in the area in 1922, and then only under close governmental supervision.

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648 Writing about the Second Rajah's policies and practices, the Ranee Margaret reveals clearly the spirit of paternalism which guided her husband's programs.

> "The Rajah's object was to persuade these people to confess the error of their ways, own themselves vanquished, make peace, and build a new village under the surveillance of the Rajah's neighbouring forts.[30] The Rajah's policy on many similar occasions was always the same: when he had succeeded in crushing the head-hunting ambitions of these tribes, the thing then to be done was to turn these people into decent subjects by making them understand that the benefits to be derived from trade and commerce were more satisfactory to their well-being (and the Rajah's author's note) than their methods of murdering and cutting off the heads of their often harmless neighbours."

In the context of the traditional non-coercive political organization and premium placed on achievements by the Ibans, the

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[30] His policy also included taking as hostages the wives of all chiefs of a rebel area as a guarantee of their men's good behavior (SG No. 181, 1 November, 1881).

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establishment of an absolute monarchy by the Brookes, with the subsidiary governments of Hose, Bailey, and other Europeans,[31] with the policies of control and containment, could only result in "a general florescence of Iban energies." Historical sources, and particularly the Sarawak Gazette, are replete with references to disturbances arising from movements, raiding, and the continuing practice of headhunting. We may speculate that the Brookes might have met with greater success had they had more personnel and funds. But, given the size and topography of Sarawak, and the persistence of the Ibans, edicts against migration without the Rajah's permission and headhunting were impossible to enforce.[32]

The subject of the Ranee Margaret's statement, quoted above, on the Second Rajah's policies was Lintong (see page 91), who refused to pay the Rajah's taxes and was angered by fines imposed on two of his followers. A Lemanak Iban who had migrated to the Julau, Lintong was urged by his brother, Buah Raya, to pay the tax of one dollar a year, because they now were held by the Rajah. Lintong steadfastly refused, saying that he had made no such agreement to pay anything to the Rajah.

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[31] Outstation Residents operated with considerable independence, as they were responsible for raising their own revenue for funding their activities.

[32] Even the efforts of a modern army whose troops are familiar with the jungle and armed with automatic weapons, helicopters, and radios, find it nigh on to impossible to contain the bands of terrorists operating in Sarawak.

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Lintong made preparations to attack (nyerang) and take the heads (ngayau) of the men in the recently built (1862) Fort Brooke in Sibu. He sent out the bungai jarau[33] to his followers who built utap (the one-way canoes) with which they descended the Kanowit and Rajang and attacked Sibu.

Taking up the account as told by the Ranee Margaret, Lintong led a fleet of boats, "manned by some three thousand men," and attacked the fort which was manned by Harry Skelton and thirteen Sikhs.[34] Two or three Iban "chiefs" and the son of Sir Hugh Low, then Colonial Secretary of Labuan, were also in the fort. After firing a barrage of poisoned arrows and barbed bamboo spears and receiving in return fire from the defenders' muskets, the Iban withdrew. During the fighting, the Iban "chiefs" in the fort

> "did nothing but peer through the lattice-work and shout Dyak insults at the attacking party, most of whom they knew very well. They made unpleasant remarks about the enemy's mothers, and inquired whether the men themselves belonged to the female sex, as their efforts were so feeble, etc."

According to a local informant's account,[35] Lintong withdrew up the Kanowit, adamant in his resistance to the Rajah. Slyly letting it

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[33] A section of balsam or other softwood cut (jarau) to resemble a flower (bungai) and sent out by a raja berani or war-leader to assemble his followers to fight.

[34] Indian Sepoys who were exiled for taking part in the Indian uprising of 1857.

[35] Tuai Rumah Ampan

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be known that he planned another attack,[36] Lintong had his forces build a new legendary longboat, Bung Ungkap, which was equipped with saplings fixed the bow and tied back on either side with creepers that could be cut for the saplings to be released and sweep through the Rajah's forces. The famous war leader (pala'tuai kayau), Geraji Tuai ("The Senior Bradawl"), joined forces with Lintong and they met the Rajah's forces at Wong Adai. The battle was one-sided, for Lintong's forces could not withstand the Rajah's troops who were armed with guns and cannons (bedil periok). A cannon blast caught the Bung Ungkap which sank,[37] and Lintong's followers were routed.[38]

The Ranee Margaret describes Lintong as "an outcast in the land" and in a letter to the Rajah, the Resident of the Rajang Division wrote that,

> "Linton (the Dyak who attacked the Sibu fort in May) has come down and met Apai Laja.[39] Lintong is desirous of building a house opposite the fort, i.e., on the other side of the river."

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[36] Lintong informed Ibans whom he knew to be friendly to the Rajah, knowing that they would inform the Rajah, whom he hoped to trap.

[37] After sinking, Bung Ungkap, which had been built according to a dream Lintong had had, changed into a nabau (a mythical python of enormous size) and rose from the depths, according to another informant.

[38] The Ranee notes simply that the Rajah led some seven thousand "Dyaks" up the Rejang where he reduced the enemy to subjection. Ibid.

[39] Orang Kaya of Pulau Keladi, a friend of the Rajah's Government (Beccari 1904-325).

175 648 Sibu was headquarters from which punitive expeditions were launched against rebels in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Defeated dissidents were resettled in the Sibu area, to be kept under surveillance by the Resident and troops.[40]

175 648 628 While some raja berani were openly hostile to the Brookes, maintaining their belligerence until forced to submit, others saw in the Rajahs an opportunity for confirmation of their positions through alignment with the Government against the hostile factions. Limited as they were in personnel and funds, the Rajahs took every advantage to strengthen ties between themselves and friendly Ibans by making them a part of punitive operations in which headhunting, otherwise illegal, was reluctantly accepted as a part of the punishment inflicted on rebels, hence, legitimized.

175 648 159 The alliance and employment of friendly Ibans with the Brookes is seen clearly in the story of Charles Brooke and the famous raja berani, Munan anak Minggat.[41] The son of Miggat, himself a famous government war-leader who engaged in various campaigns against Iban rebels in the Upper Katibas and Batang Lupar Rivers during the 1870's and 1880's, Munan was involved in a grand-scale family feud over the

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[40] "The tribe on the upper Katibas are moving down to the neighbourhood of Sibu, where it is the wish of the government that they should settle permanently." (SG No. 8, 17 December, 1879).

[41] See, Genealogy No. 23, p. 112, in Sandin 1967.

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175 appointment to a successor to his father as pengulu. Being the eldest
648 son, Munan felt that he should take his father's place, and was backed
159 in this by his mother and other powerful relatives. However, the Rajah appointed a man named Ampan, who was backed by the Resident, D.J.S. Bailey, who claimed that Ampan had been chosen in a free election (SG No. 320, 1 September, 1892).[42] Relations between Munan and Bailey grew increasingly hostile until in 1893, Munan was imprisoned in Kuching for allegedly having urged "home rule" to the people of the Krian (SG No. 336, 2 January, 1894). Released at the end of summer of 1893, Munan was ordered to move to Sibu.

After arriving in the Rejang, Munan and his followers built a longhouse at Pulau Keretau opposite Fort Brooke. He was an astute businessman and shrewd politician-cum-war-leader, quickly accumulating wealth and securing his position and virtual command of the lower Rejang and Igan Rivers by obtaining the appointment of his kinsmen as pengulu in Sarikei, Bawang Assan, Aup and Durin. With these political alliances approved by the Rajah, Munan was at the center of such a military network

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[42] This is doubtful, for as Pringle writes (1970-179n), the more common practice at that time was for the Resident to consult with the heads of longhouses and make the selection, subject to approval by the Rajah.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
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175 that,
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> "he became the mainstay of any Government-sponsored war expedition operating in the Third Division."

Significantly, he had achieved his position by a "Government-sponsored" migration which permitted him the freedom to operate in the Rajang that previously had been denied him in the Second Division.

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648 In 1898, Munan lead a force of 430 Ibans against the rebel
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159 Bantin and his followers in the Upper Batang Lupar, at the request of the Rajah. It is indicative of the alliance and relationship which had developed to the mutual advantage of the Rajah and raja berani that Bailey, the Resident, was not officially informed of the action that was to be carried out in his own backyard. He distrusted rumors about the expedition, only to find that they were indeed true when Munan and his band, brandishing freshly taken heads, appeared before his headquarters on their triumphant return.

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648 Munan was accorded special recognition by the Rajah who, in 1900,
159 conferred on him the special title, Pengulu Dalam, literally the "in Pengulu" or the one on whom the Rajah depended.[43] He sat on Council Negri and received a regular salary from the Government as a native

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[43] In the case of Munan and later, of Pengulu Dalam Ujang, there had been a period of disfavor, after which neither could be appointed pengulu but whose favored positions were indicated in the title originated by Charles Brooke. For a discussion of the meaning and origin of pengulu dalam see Pringle, 1970-186n.

175 magistrate empowered to hear cases in court.
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Muman was among the first Ibans in the Third Division to plant rubber, and his advice was sought by Government when the Matang Estate was established near Kuching in 1903 (SG No. 448, 2 May, 1902). He invested in shophouses in the Sibu pasar and after the fire which destroyed the pasar in 1902, he was the first to undertake reconstruction of his shophouses, as mentioned in the Resident's report:

> "It is noteworthy of the enterprise of the Dyaks that the first to begin building on the old sites was the Dyak chief Pengulu Dalam, who although he lost by the fire two new houses is now erecting the first brick house yet build in Sibu."

In addition to the brick shophouses, described later on in the Resident's report as "the finest in Sibu," Muman also held rights to extensive areas of land in what now is the Bukit Lima section of the Sibu Urban area.[44] Muman died in Sibu in 1914,

> "wealthy in money, in prestige, and in human head trophies, all of them taken loyally fighting for the Government."[45]

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648 For whatever reasons, through the settlement of groups such as Lintong's and Muman's the Rajah's "enemies" and "friends," the presence

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[44] These lands were kept in the family until Lemok anak Manggah's generation, when they were sold by her brother, Melina, to Chinese.

[45] For Muman's obituary, see SG No. 666, 16 December, 1914.

175 of the Ibans in the Sibu District came into being in the late nineteenth
648 and early twentieth centuries.

We turn now to consider the coming of the Chinese who, with the Ibans, are the most populous groups in the District.

000 E. The Chinese

James Brooke had lofty ambitions for the transformation of Sarawak into a "second Java" (Templer 1853 II-42). In order to realize the goals he envisioned, the first Rajah wanted to encourage Chinese and Javanese immigration, from which he hoped to derive the labor and income needed to build his state. However, little was accomplished during his rule for he was too taken up with extension of his territory and almost bankrupted after the Chinese rebellion of 1857.

The second Rajah promoted Chinese immigration for reasons similar to those in other Southeast Asian areas. Europeans in the area felt that the indigenous peoples were not able to meet the labor requirements for economic development, that they were incorrigibly lazy, inherently slow, or just unmotivatable. Charles Brooke was determined to encourage agricultural productivity while, at the same time, protecting the way of life of the indigenes.

From his earliest days as an outstation official, under the first Rajah, Charles Brooke saw the vast and largely untouched Rejang area as

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu

000 The first group arrived in May, 1912, and were settled below Sibu on [464] the right bank of the Igan near Sungai Merah. They used part of the money they had brought with them to employ Ibans from the Aup area for felling the jungles. The Henghuas were more successful in rice cultivation than the Foochows had been, raising enough for their own consumption but rarely having any surpluses.[46] In addition, they planted rubber and grew vegetables, which they were able to sell because of the great demand in the Sibu pasar (SG No. 627, 1 May, 1913).

• 175 177 The settling of several thousand Chinese among the Ibans and Malays of the Rejang raised several problems. One of the major ones which soon arose, and to this day is unsolved and a source of tremendous anxiety to Government officials, was that of land relations. There was a tendency for the colonists, especially the Foochows, to leave the areas allotted for settlement and take up land on the outside as squatters. This tendency in part was due to the inadequacy of the areas allotted to them, in part due to their desire to develop lands that appeared to them unclaimed, in part a lack of understanding of indigenous attitudes towards land, and in part, due to the absence of any clear and comprehensive land law.

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[46] The Resident's report says that the Henghuas raised enough rice to supply Sibu (SG No. 674, 16 April, 1915), but the settler, Ling Kai Cheng states emphatically that this was not the case (interview 23 September, 1971).

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423 Traditionally, the Ibans and other indigenes maintained that land was held with usufruct rights in perpetuity by the descendants of the pioneer who cleared the land, or persons to whom they gave [671] usufruct rights. Under Iban adat, such land could not be alienated by Government nor acquired by squatters, such as the Chinese. Whether or not the land was used, they still maintained usufruct rights to it.

175 177 The Third Division reports of the first three decades of this century contain numerous accounts of land disputes, caused by Chinese encroachment on what appeared to them to be empty land.[47] In some cases, the Chinese rented land from the Ibans, for example, in the Assan opposite Pengulu Abas' house (SG No. 817, 1 October, 1921). In other instances, the saw "empty" land and took it over (SG No. 862, 1 July, 1925), resulting in complaints that,

> "Foochow Chinese are encroaching on their land at Sungei Merah; the matter will be looked into."

In still other situations, the Ibans,

> "agreed to give Chinese 300 acres at Rantau Panjang for farming purposes."

In some cases, however, hostilities broke out between the Ibans who resented the invasions of the Chinese, and the newcomers.

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[47] See, for example, SG No. 441, 1902-201; No. 419, 1903-124; No. 813, 1921-111; No. 862, 1925-169; No. 880, 1927-15; No. 918, 1930-75; No. 840, 1932; No. 1002, 1937-74; No. 1331, 1969-13-15.

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> "These constant disputes led to eight Foochows being attacked by Binatang Dayaks. Three of the Chinese were wounded and all their property were (sic) looted."

More will be said on the subject of land when we deal with communal relations, suffice it here to note that in August, 1909, the Rajah issued a special land order for the Rejang, in which Ibans, Malays, and Chinese were allowed to take out grants for their holdings, thereby greatly enhancing the value of their property (at least in the view of Government, which benefitted by revenue from fees paid). Special areas were set aside as Chinese areas and, while many did register their lands, others joined the ranks of the squatters. Some Ibans steadfastly refused to take out such grants,[48] and in some cases, such as those of the Bavang Assan Ibans who had planted their rubber at Bukit Lan, they consequently were forced by Government to remove from the land.

A willingness by indigenes to sell their land to Chinese for the benefits of ready cash caused tremendous concern to Government officers. A number of regulations attempted to remedy the situation but with mixed success (SGG 2 January, 1915). Even today, when Chinese are still technically restricted from holding or acquiring land in the Native Zone,

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[48] They also refused to pay an annual assessment which the Government announced in 1911 (SGG 1 June, 1909).

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195 but numerous ways are found to circumvent this restriction.[49]
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Near the end of his reign, Charles Brooke became very concerned with the Iban's proclivity to sell their land to any and all takers, and in a moving speech before Council Negri on 17 August, 1915, the aging Rajah delivered a warning to the Malays and indigenes to treasure their land, to avoid at all costs allowing foreign speculators and exploiters gaining control of the land. But, his fear at the time was not so much of Chinese encroachment as the possible appearance of a European planter class in Sarawak (SGG 1 September, 1915), whom he feared for the threat they posed to his position as absolute monarch.

000 The demand of the Chinese in Sarawak for land still is a volatile political issue of the first magnitude.[50] The Chinese, who form about one-third of the total population, can buy only land classified as Mixed Zone Land (4,000 square miles), under existing laws. As more than three-quarters of Mixed Zone Land is either held under customary tenure and is therefore Native Customary Land or is unsuitable

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[49] The Report of The Land Commission, 1962 recommends "that all that is needed for the protection of the native interests is a simple Law to the effect that 'no native shall sell, lease, charge or in anyway dispose of or deal with his land or any right or interest in it' except with the consent of the Resident" (1963-16). According to one source, this consent has been obtained on occasion by appraising the Resident of debts incurred by an Iban to a Chinese, the transfer of land being made in lieu of payment of debt.

[50] To date, Government has not touched the outdated system of Land Laws.

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000 pepper produced in the District.[53] The Hokkiens are a minority group in Sibu, but are important in the grocery trade. The Henghuas are found primarily in rural areas, where they produce rubber and vegetables. Those Henghuas engaged in trade in Sibu have been mainly active in mechanical and repair shops, specialising in the maintenance of bicycles, motorcycles, and cars.[54]

175 177 During the years of the expansion of rubber production, economic ties were strengthened between Sibu and the hinterland, by the building of small shophouses in locations accessible to rural residents. Because of the possible outbreak of violence, the shops were located on the main rivers near the mouths of tributaries. These shops exchanged jungle produce and rubber for food, the acid needed for processing rubber or jelutong, and, over the years, an increasingly large inventory of necessary and luxury items.[55] In this way, small villages grew up along

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[53] The Cantonese are particularly numerous in Sarikei and Miri, where they have taken up pepper production, labor and artisan activities.

[54] As might be expected, there are exceptions to generalizations about occupations of dialect groups. For example, members of the Tnay family, Henghuas from Sungai Teku, share in a travel agency in Sibu and Kuching, and recently obtained a place for another member, a young woman, with Malaysia-Singapore Airways in Singapore.

[55] The Durin pasar numbers about one dozen shops, including coffee shops and grocery stores, selling everything from salt and matches to V.S.O.P. Brandy.

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175 177 the Bejang and Igan Rivers at Durin, Salim, Assan, Penasu, Ensurai and Bukit Lan. Gradually, as Government was able to give more protection and a greater degree of security in rural areas, Chinese shopkeepers penetrated the tributaries, in some cases going as far up as the last longhouse, farming and growing rubber, fruit and vegetables as well as acting as middlemen in the rural trade.[56]

000 The Foochow domination of trade and commerce in the Sibu District is due in part to their overwhelming members. As indicated in Table 9 on the following page, by 1947, their total number in both rural and urban areas was almost three times that of all other Chinese. In the rural area, the Foochows were six times as numerous as the next largest group, the Cantonese. And in the urban area, they were more than twice as many as the Hokkien, second to them in numbers.

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[56] The recent increase in terrorism and the general insecurity that has accompanied it has prompted the movement of rural residents, especially Chinese, into Sibu. Between the time when the First and Second Stages of the 1970 Census were taken in the Sibu Rural District, almost 1,800 Chinese moved from the rural areas into Sibu. The First Stage showed a total of 32,478 Chinese in the Sibu Rural District. The Second Stage, taken four months later, showed only 30,683. A majority of these people moved into Sibu, according to Urban District Council and Education Department officials, who have been concerned with their placement in work and their children in schools. At the same time, and unrelated to this, the rise of a new image and ethnic consciousness among Ibans has resulted in the supplanting of Chinese by Iban shopkeepers in several areas; e.g., Ulu Durin Kiba.

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665 177 and reach decisions in the situations demanding compromise, has resulted in a general loss of power among those who account for one-third of the population of Sarawak.

175 177 In summary, the peopling of the Sibu District has taken place largely within the past century. Ibans, practicing shifting cultivation, moved into the area from the south via the Sarikei and Kanowit Rivers, crossed the Rejang and moved throughout the northern part of the District. The planting of rubber gardens and the shift to the cultivation of wet-rice in many parts of the District resulted in a sedentariness that is a new phenomenon within this century. Malays, sometimes in alliance with Ibans, moved in from the west. Relying at first on rice horticulture, which declined in importance, the Malay population came to depend upon trade and employment for their livelihood. Chinese were encouraged by the Second Rajah to migrate to the Rejang Delta, and the thousands of them who came wrought vast changes in the land on which they settled. Forsaking rice cultivation for the more lucrative industries of rubber, pepper and timber, the Chinese have built Sibu into the most important entrepot in Sarawak.

177 There has been exchange between members of these groups, and the small number of orang putih, at virtually all levels of life. So that in the pluralistic society of Sibu, accommodation and acculturation are long-established practices that have resulted in both structural, economic and

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000 Brooke feared a possible invasion by European planters. This fear stemmed in part from an anxious concern that such a group not bilk the natives of their land, but also in part from the realization that planters would not have accepted his rule unquestioningly or put up with the casual government which he headed.[3]

175 177 Brooke's statement to the Bishop of Sarawak, that

> "I know the Dayak mind much better that I do my own brothers (and) countrymen..."[4]

was no idle boast. For Charles Brooke had lived more or less intimately with the Ibans at the time of that writing. But intimacy does not preclude paternalism; rather, his awareness of how well he knew his subjects served to re-inforce his conviction that he also knew what was best for them.

Although he wrote of keeping Sarawak as it was, and he stereotyped the Ibans in his desire to preserve their nativeness (Brooke 1866 II: 214), the policies he made and practices he implemented, such as the founding of fort-towns and the encouragement of Chinese group immigration, effected radical changes among the Ibans, and particularly in the Rejang area. In a very real way, Sibu was built because of the Ibans and, in part by

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[3] While the Rajah's policy of encouraging small-holding rubber vis-a-vis the plantations of West Malaysia has been praised by some writers, small-holders today cannot complete in quality of production with the plantations. Yesterday's blessings are today's curses.

[4] Charles Brooke to Bishop W.R. Mounsey, 20 December, 1909, SA.

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them, and in the interplay that has taken place in the past three-quarters of a century, their adaptation and orientation has changed in response to the developing town. From a people who were characterized by their independence, the Ibans of the Sibu District still maintain the value of independence as a cultural norm or ideal, but in fact are markedly dependent upon Sibu as an administrative center for the legitimization of their activities and investments, and as a center of trade for the goods they produced and others they need. The rise and development of Sibu has had widely ramifying effects both structurally and culturally in Iban society, as will be discussed below.

1. Expansion of Brooke Rule

Sibu owes its existence to the expansion of Brooke rule, Iban migrations and headhunting, and the Rajah's policy of constructing forts during the nineteenth century. Like many of Sarawak's other towns, Sibu was built where no permanent settlement had existed previously. Chinese traders were attracted to the protection of the fort and, typical of other Sarawak towns, Sibu became a center of the expanding local administration and trade.

In 1845, two events prompted the Rajah to visit the Rajang for the first time. Early in that year, a group Melanau spokesmen visited Kuching, complained about Iban headhunting, and asked for protection.

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175 721 Not surprisingly, the Rajah, anxious to protect the important sago-producing settlements at Matu, Paloh, Igan, Oya and Mukah, held the ruler of Sarikei, Data Patinggi Abdul Rahman, to be in league with the Ibans, if he was not actually instigating the attacks. The second event took place at the end of the year, when two of the Rajah's favorites and strongest supporters were murdered in Brunei by an anti-British faction. In 1846, he arranged for reprisals to be meted out to Brunei by a strong British force, and for a visit and show of strength to be made up the Rejang as far as Kanowit.

175 648 Brooke was slow to realize the full import of the Iban attacks, at first believing them to be headhunting raids from the Saribas and Skrang. But in 1849, he sent a force of native allies up the Kanowit River to punish Mujah, the famous pioneer and war leader. The force made no contact with Mujah, but destroyed eighteen Iban longhouses, the presence of which awakened the Rajah to the true nature of the migrations that were taking place.

In 1849, a fort was built at Kanowit, but

> "this pioneer effort at outstation administration in the Rejang, about which little else is known, failed."

In 1851, the Kanowit Fort was re-established with a British officer, Henry Steele, and seventy Malays in residence. The importance of the Kanowit Fort was that it commanded the Kanowit River system, one of the

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175 two principal waterways through which the Ibans were moving into the
648 middle and lower Rejang. Further, the Kanowit District was a particularly troublesome area from the time of the first action in 1849 until the Asun rebellion, almost a century later in 1932.

2. The Founding of Fort Brooke

[166] The continuing movement of Ibans into the Rejang through the Kanowit and Sarikei Rivers, and their spread to the Igan and northern tributaries of the Rejang, prompted the construction of Fort Brooke. The strategic advantage of Sibu was its location at the point of division of the Rejang and Igan Rivers, providing a position for a relatively centralized administration of the area.

The beginning of Sibu as a town may be dated from 1862, when Fort Brooke was constructed. As noted previously, the only settlement in the area prior to that was the Melanau village at Kampong Nangka. Within a decade or so of the founding of the fort, Chinese traders had built a pasar of sixty shophouses, and Sibu was on its way to becoming the largest center for trade in the Rejang.

3. A Center in Pacification

000 The first purpose of the construction of Fort Brooke was pacification of the area under its jurisdiction so that economic development could take place. As noted in the last chapter, James Brooke was beset

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000 with the Chinese uprising in 1857 and "the Malay Plot" (Pringle 1970, Chapter 4), both of which episodes drained the financial resources of the First Rajah to the point of Bankruptcy. The second and more lasting of the conflicts between the Brookes and the Brunei Malays, was over control of the economically valuable, sago-exporting Melanau country of the coast of the Third Division. Although the acquisition of the present Third Division was made by the Brookes in the Treaties of 1853 and 1861, the terms of the Treaties had to be backed by force of arms, and even half-a-century after the first treaty was signed, the Rajang was described as being still "in an unsettled state" (SG No. 461, 4 June, 1904).

• 175 657 Fort Brooke became the central base of operations from which the Rajah's decrees was distributed, fines meted out to offenders and, when necessary, parties dispatched to enforce government policies or to carry out punitive raids. Iban leaders who mounted opposition to the Brooke government were brought to Sibu either for punishment or temporary incarceration. We have described in the last chapter how Nanan and his anembiak were required to move from the Krian to Sibu, and how Lintong had to leave the Julau to move under the shadow of Fort Brooke. Similarly, the dissident Poi Ibans were made to move to the Igan where they could be kept under close surveillance.

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• 195 648 In the beginning, the force in Fort Brooke was comprised of one British officer and twenty or so Indian Sepoys, exiled from India following the Mutiny of 1857. From available evidence, the force was never a large one, and heavy reliance was placed upon the alliances between the Rajah's government and friendly Ibans. For example, Munan [538] could readily raise a band of fighters, and did so when required. The two late great war-leaders of Bawang Assan, Gani Apai Engkamat and Pengulu Nanta, are the focus of numerous stories for their bravery in the service of the Rajah.[5]

By the beginning of this century, according to the terms of agreement offered by the Second Rajah to encourage Chinese group immigration, police barracks were constructed,[6] and by the 1920's, both Sarawak Police and Rangers were stationed in Sibu. In addition to the Sepoys mentioned above, Ibans, Malays and Chinese were recruited to the Sarawak Police, while the Rangers remained almost entirely an Iban unit. Recruitment of Ibans for the Police was stopped in 1926, in part due to an amok[7] scare which occurred in Sibu, in part due to

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[5] According to local lore, Pengulu Nanta was possessed of kebal or invulnerability. In one battle, he fell and though slashed viciously across the back of the neck, he was unwounded.

[6] "The somewhat unsightly condition of the Police Quarters to which my attention was directed on Your Highness' last visit to Sibu has been rectified" (SG No. 441, 1 October, 1902).

[158] [7] Literally, "running wild," a culturally patterned disturbance in which the individual slashes about him at anyone within reach with a knife, cleaver, or other sharp object.

195 the strongly pro-Malay attitudes of the Third Rajah which were beginning
648 to emerge at that time.[8]

177 Sibu continues as a center for pacification, and at present, a policy of open recruitment of members of all ethnic groups is followed by the Police, but indigenous groups continue to dominate the Rangers and Field Force. Recruitment by and employment in the various branches of law enforcement has resulted in a long history of exposure of indigenes and their families to life in Sibu. Recently, with the communist campaign in Malaya in the 1950's, confrontation with Indonesia in the 1960's, and the increase in terrorist activities locally over the past two years,[9] the number of men employed in the military and police has been greatly increased. Ibans and other indigenes served as Scouts and Rangers in Malaya, and along the Indonesian border. An estimated 500 members of the Field Force live in barracks at Upper Lanang, and a like number of Rangers are encamped beyond the Sibu Airport. Some members of the Police live in barracks off Race Course Road, others in private residences. Some men live with their families in the barracks, others have their families in apartments along Lanang Road, at Sungai Antu, or wherever space can be found off the many tracks and side roads.

[8] This will be discussed in detail later, but the Native Service became an entirely Malay preserve under the Third Rajah.

[9] While incidents such as the anti-Malaysia riot in August, 1963, the occasional painting of schools and the Chartered Bank, have a long history, the frequency of terrorist activities has picked up in the past two years when the Maoist "mushroom tactics" have been followed.

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found off the many tracks and side roads.

The establishment of Police and Rangers at Fort Brooke enabled the Rajah through his Residents to implement decrees suppressing head-hunting and raiding. Offenders were brought before the Resident's Court, where western justice was dealt them. In one of the earlies records of such a trial, the following appears:

Fort Brooke
Sibu
28th May, 1891

"Rajah. - I have the honor to inform Your Highness that the five S'Batu Dyaks, Merchi, Masi, Ayus, Chambul, and Lawai, were yesterday found guilty in the Supreme Court here of the wilful murder of four Kanowit Dayaks, named Ambul, Baling, Belitang, and Benang in the Katibas River, that I accordingly passed sentence of death upon these five murderers, and, acting upon Your Highness's instructions, had this sentence carried into effect in the customary manner."

B. Development of Administrative Functions

The founding of Fort Brooke and the growth of Sibu pasar was accompanied by the development of a number of administrative functions, through which the Iban population increasingly has been related to the center. The more important of these are discussed below.

1. Courts

From the last decade of the nineteenth century until the present, the Sibu courts have grown in importance in the lives not only of urban residents but also as a focus of power over the lives and property of

175 657 persons in outlying regions as well. For example, an early Resident's report noted that

> "in November, in the Sibu Court, Kan, Saran, and Lajun were fined $50 each for maliciously bringing false charges against Laun, Tuah Kampong of Tian. Simadom, Sigat, and S'Badul, of Matu, were fined $20 each for assaulting one Chu Beng, and at Kapit, Private Dulah, fortman, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for theft of Government money, and of goods belonging to his comrades. . ."

The increase in both criminal and civil cases resulted in a division of labor between the Resident's Court, which heard murder cases, the District Court which tried civil cases, and the Magistrate's [691] Court which handled petty debt cases and other legal matters. The growth of the court system, combined with the Iban's proclivity to litigation and preference of an outsider[10] as arbiter, resulted in additional gains in the Rajah's government's strength as Ibans and other indigenes sought for hearings before the courts.

2. Political Integration

175 657 177 A further development which contributed to the transfer of judical power from the traditional longhouse community to the urban center was the creation of a hierarchical structure of official power to which

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[829] [10]The fear of factions is expressed clearly in this preference, for favoritism and nepotism are not vices but ways of strengthening one's position and that of one's relatives vis-a-vis others. Factions are not suspected: they are recognized as existing and a part of Iban social organization. So, appeal to a more neutral/party assures an impartial verdict.

175 the Ibans became oriented. Whereas the Ibans had supported no leaders
657 and acknowledged the leadership of individuals only on ad hoc occasions,
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173 for example, the orang tau tusut (genealogist) for researching family
787 lines to determine the marriageability of a couple, or the tuai burong (augur) to discern the meaningful calls and flights of omen birds for events connected with the horticultural season or pejalai, the Rajah
622 established a network of power ties with himself as the vertex. With encouraged or enforced sedentariness, Iban longhouse communities selected tuai rumah who adjudicated problems and land disputes internal to the
631 community. At a higher level were the pengulu (or penghulu), a position that was created by the Second Rajah and the title was first used in the investiture of the pengulu in Sibu.[11] The Iban Pengulu, the Malay tuah kampong, and the Chinese kang chew formed the second level in the hierarchical structure, as community leaders. At the third level was a diverse native service with a corps of Native Officers, composed largely but not exclusively of Malay aristocrats. Above them, at the fourth level, were the Residents, and, at the apex, the Rajah.

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[11] "At the Fort (Brooke) the Resident (Mr. Low) had assembled all the Dayak tuahs who were now to receive the title of 'pengulu'. The Fort was crowded and H.H. the Rajah then addressed the meeting. . .he hoped that the Dayak chiefs before him who had for so long supported the government would continue to do so, not only in their own houses, but by all acting in concert, and by doing this should any disaffection arise they themselves could suppress it in the land." (SG 212, 1 September, 1883)

175 657 177

"Including the Rajah, the entire structure may be regarded as a four-(or five, depending on whether the tuai rumah is included) tiered layering of usually benevolent despotisms, excepting perhaps the level of the community headmen who acted more as arbitrators and intermediaries than as rulers."

631 177 The creation of the status of pengulu had far-reaching implications in the loosely structured Iban political organization. The pengulu supervised collection of the annual family tax, and received a commission of 692 ten per cent on all taxes collected. The pengulu were empowered to judge inter-house disputes, such as quarrels over land boundaries, adultery, or cases that the tuai rumah could not resolve. In the Third Division, pengulu were allowed to levy fines on which they received a 715 commission of ten per cent. In the mid-1920's, under the Third Rajah, the pengulu of the Third Division began to receive salaries in lieu of commissions on taxes and fines.

484 The pengulu were expected to raun ("travel around") at least once a year, to hear cases and keep in touch with local situations, as well to appraise residents of longhouses of government policies and activities of concern to them. In 1939, a rumah kunsil ("Native Officers' House," for the past twenty years or more commonly known as the Rumah Temuai, "Guest House") was built beside the stream, that flowed past Sibu Island and into the Igan. This house had seven rooms, or one for each of the seven pengulu of the Sibu District in which they could stay while in Sibu.

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657 the District Office which handles a large number of activities and serves
[175] many functions. The term "District" was not clearly defined until after the Second Rajah, sometimes Divisions being referred to as Districts, sometimes individual river systems were termed Districts. It was only under the Third Rajah that Districts and District Officers came to have their present meanings.

The District Officer is the administrative head of the Sibu District, and is assisted by a Sarawak Administrative Officer. (S.A.O.). The District Officer is an advisor to the Urban and Rural District Councils, and all policy matters of both councils must be channeled through the District Officer for his information, whether he agrees with the matters or not. He also is the Probate Officer, handling all estates of money or land that must be probated.

Regarding Chinese and indigenous affairs, all deeds to property
[578] must be registered in the District Office. Family and land dis-putes that are not settled to the satisfaction of all parties by the tuai rumah and pengulu, in the case of Ibans, or the kapitan, in the case of Chinese, may be appealed to the D.O. Chinese, civil and church marriages must be registered with the Registrar of Marriages in the District Office in order for them to be recognized by Government, and in accordance with the Laws of Sarawak. All businesses opened in the Urban area must be approved by the Urban District Council, and registered in the District Office

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4. District Councils

175 657 In the early 1920's, the Sibu Municipal Board was established to assist in administration of urban affairs, primarily having responsibiliti for rental rates, zoning, building permits and registration of business (SG No. 864, 1 September, 1925, page 227). The Municipal Board was replaced by the District Council, a short-lived body which came into existence in 1947 (SG No. 1071, 2 June, 1947).

In January, 1952, the Sibu Urban District Council (S.U.D.C.) was formed to replace the Municipal Board, with jurisdiction over the area

> "from the end of the Aup Road across and including Sungei Merah and the air landing ground, down to a point somewhat opposite Pulau Kerto, inclusive of Pulau Kerto, across to include a small portion of Tanjong Engkilo, then following down the Igan to the starting point near the Aup Road."

631 At the same time, the Sibu Rural District Council, (S.R.D.C.) a multi-racial organization, was established to replace the Sea Dayak Local Authority, and to administer the remainder of the District.

The Rural District Council has been of great importance in the lives and activities of Ibans of this District, relating them to the [651] administration and services of Government. Each tuai bilik has at least an annual contact with the S.R.D.C. when he pays his taxes.[14]

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[14] Taxes are based upon rentable value of property, and in the case of Ibans, each bilik must pay a rate of M$3.60 or 4.20, depending on the age of the house. In addition, Ibans pay $1 for each shotgun, $10 for radio license (to Telecoms), $1 per acre of farm land, and $3 per acre of rubber garden.

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631 Eight of the Councillors are Ibans.[15] The Council meets quarterly, dealing with matters of revenue and finance, road building and maintenance, education and public health.

5. Codification of Adat

The Brookes' respect for local customary laws and their strong 671 657 determination to bring these into line with western codes resulted in a 175 number of meetings of the Rajahs' representatives with Ibans knowledgeable in adat. One of the most important aum ("meeting," miting) was held in 1932 when every pengulu except one in the Third Division met in Sibu met with the Tuan Muda Bertram Brooke and other Government officials. Reporting on the aum, the Tuan Muda wrote:

> "It had been impressed on the Penghulus and Tuai Rumah that the rumours of Government interference with tribal usage were purely illusory: the trouble lay with the Dyaks themselves, who were at variance as to what constituted breaches of their own customs, so that Your Highness had summoned this aum at Sibu, in order that the matter might be thoroughly threshed out and definite uniformity arrived at amongst Penghulus, Tuai, and anembiak throughout the Division."

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[15] The Iban Councillors and the wards they represent (in parentheses) are: Pengulu Poh ak Kaya (Pasai Siong), Badang ak Gamau (Rasau), M.P. Tiboh ak Rantai (Keladi), Pengarah Chundi ak Pengulu Resa (Penasu), Jonathan Banggau ak Renang (Lassa), Pengulu Pengabang ak Impak (Assan), Sandah ak Pengulu Jarraw (Naman), and Anji ak Judi (Menyan).

691 Participants in the aum began by listing all controversial
657 customs and penalties, and debate was held on each aspect of adat
175 about which there was disagreement. After some consonance had been reached on each item, the pengulu and tuai returned to consult with their anembiak, and after a final discussion, the Iban adat for the Third Divisio was drafted:

> "Pengulu Dalam (Ujang) opened the proceedings with a speech announcing that uniformity had been achieved, and the Resident then read out the clauses in detail, setting forth the agreed penalty for each offence. No voice of dissent was heard."[16]

Subsequent meetings were held, for example in 1936 and 1952, for the amending of the codified adat, with the publication of Tusun
691 Tunggu[17] as the product of the aum. Although both the Rajah's and the
178 Colonial Government attempted to codify Iban adat to bring it into line with the rulers' expectations, experience since the publication of Tusun Tunggu indicates that it is impossible to comprehend adat in a neatly arranged code.[18] As one astute student of customary law in

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[538 829] [16] Undoubtedly true, but the Iban expression, aum jusk, deriving from a folk-story about the ikan jusk (a river fish) who was false to an agreement he made not to bite the legs of birds who alighted in the river, reveals a common understanding among Ibans that you cannot take silent consent or even acknowledged agreement to preclude dissent outside of an aum.

[17] A list of fines.

[764] [18] I have seen a tuai rumah and his anembiak hassle for two hours about the propitiation to be paid the antu before a corpse of someone who died outside the house could be brought in. On another occasion, a pengulu, tuai rumah and tuai bilik spent an evening discussing payments to be made when bringing a corpse across another family's ruai.

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175 657 The Second Rajah was determined to promote Chinese group immigration, for the economic development of the lower Rejang. Despite early indications to the contrary, he was convinced that any problems over land between the Chinese and other ethnic groups could be resolved. His view that there was empty land and plenty for all was essentially true,[20] but as we have described in Chapter One, much land remains empty because it is infertile, inaccessible, or both. As Pringle succinctly puts it:

> ". . .As a matter of practical fact, there is frequently not enough usable land for all, and since World War II this effective shortage has been a growing cause of political tension."

197 423 Land disputes between Chinese and Ibans began in the first year of the Foochow arrival, and were a continuous source of conflict between the persons involved as well as to Government. The disputes reached a climax in the "Binatang Disputes of 1925,"[21] but tensions over land and the inadequacy of existing land laws continue to vex Government today.

The problems that arose were in part technical, in part cultural, and involved the two groups' use and attitudes towards land. The Chinese, coming from the overpopulated southeastern provinces of China, saw the

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[20] An estimated three-quarters of Sarawak is still virgin forest (Annual Report, 1963:49).

[21] See, "The Binatang Land Disputes, 1925," SG, No. 1331, 1969: 13-15.

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In the Second Rajah's attempt to resolve the land disputes, he set aside land on both sides of the Rejang for a distance of twelve miles below Sibu for Chinese settlers, requiring all non-Chinese to move immediately from the area. Describing this action by the Rajah, James Hoover wrote:

> "From the very beginning land disputes arose between the colonists and the natives so that something had to be done to define the boundaries of the colony. On one of the late Rajah's (Charles Brooke) visits he called into the local fort (Sibu) the head men of the Chinese, Malays, and Dayaks, and said to them: 'This colony is here. We will not discuss whether it is a good thing or not, but since it is here, and there is abundant land for everybody in this district, I am going to set aside certain areas for the Foochows, out of which they will not be allowed to settle, and into which no others will be allowed to go. All Dayaks, Malays and others now living in this area must move out at once.' He then had a large map hung on the wall, and he himself with a blue pencil marked points on the river bank showing the extent of the grants."

The Rajah's designation of certain areas for Chinese in no way solved the problems, and complaints of their encroachments onto indigenes' lands continued. His conviction that drawing out lines of settlement would keep the groups apart was naive, for it did not reckon with the Chinese farmers' desire for more land, or with the indigenes' willingness to sell any and all land if the price seemed right to them. A further practical problem was that no means existed for adequate supervision of the settlements of the Chinese immigrants and their cultivation, so that Government had no way of knowing whether they trespassed onto

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other land than that granted them.[24]

The continuing disputes between Chinese and non-Chinese in the lower Rejang resulted in the promulgation of a number of land laws, aimed at protecting the indigenes from the Chinese.[25] Out-stations of the Land and Survey Department were established to carry out surveys and to establish property boundaries as well as to enforce land regulations. Although the Second Rajah assumed that his intimate knowledge of the Ibans served in his preservation of their "nativeness," yet the laws he instituted and the boundaries he drew around the various ethnic groups had far-reaching effects in the life of the Ibans. That these laws contravened the adat which was a part of the traditional Iban life as the Rajah perceived it, goes without saying.[26] His restraint

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[24] "Owing to the lack of a proper Land Department at Sibu, with consequently no surveys, land grants have been issued promiscuously in the past." (SG No. 804, 1 November, 1920).

[25] The most important land laws are those enacted in 1931 and 1933, on which present regulations are based.

[26] Writing on the bind Government officers find themselves in between land regulations and adat, F.R.K.K. warns that "much harm in land affairs (can be done) by rigourously following our existing land laws. . . We very much doubt whether the axiom in the 1939 Secretariat circular, 'Removal to another district automatically extinguishes all rights of user' is in every case in accordance with the customary law of a particular community. In fact, natives do change their abode, arrange for someone to look after their land and return afterwards to enjoy the benefit of the land. Again, the injunction, 'no community may hold up land in excess of requirements,' (who is to determine the 'requirements'?) ("Customary Land Tenure," SG No. 1130, 31 May, 1952).

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195 of their migrations, encouragement of rubber planting, and establish-
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423 ment in the Land and Survey Department of an external authority to validate land tenure radically changed the social organization of the Ibans who responded to his Government, as they became sedentary and
[193] oriented to a cash economy. The practice of preserving lengthy genealogies for validating land holdings, typical of shifting cultivators, is virtually extinct among Sibu Ibans, for authority now is invested in the surat tanah ("land letter"). Although not all land in the District is held under permit or has been surveyed, yet there is none that can be described as unclaimed or undesignated on land maps.

7. Protector of Resources

The development of Sibu as a center for the administration of
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657 resources included the establishment of the Forest Department in 1919. The Department has responsibility for the constitution and administration of various categories of forests, for example, those that may be exploited by timber companies and those that may not be.

The florescence of the timber industry in the late 1940's and
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657 from the 1950's on, required overall supervision to insure against the
313 indiscriminate felling of forests. Of concern to the Ibans were those forests that were important to them for the wood for their longhouses and the products that they collected for sale. The rapidly expanding timber operations struck fear among many Ibans that the forests and

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197 of estates that are brought to the District Office for probate. Although
420 as one informant stated this is relatively new and not many Ibans are
657 aware of p'robit (v.f. m'ribit), yet in figures available, Iban estates accounted for almost one-third of those probated in Sibu. For example, in 1952, Iban estates numbered 37 of a total of 105 probated (see Table 11 on page 167). This development is due to several factors. First is the Iban principle of partible inheritance. With the exception of smoked head (antu pala'), all other objects in a bilik may be divided among the heirs. Usually, division is made between the heirs or, if they fail to agree on the division, the tuai rumah may be asked to determine the share of each heir. Second, as already noted, as the Ibans moved into the Sibu District, they planted rubber gardens and began the cultivation of swamp rice, with a resulting sedentariness. Instead of cultivating and moving on, as had been their practice, they invested time, energy
175 and money in the development of their lands. Third, with the Chinese
423 immigrations reaching flood proportions by the mid-1920's, it became expedient if not imperative for Ibans to acquire O.T's ("Occupation Tickets") to guarantee their rights to farmlands and rubber gardens. Without an O.T., an Iban faced possible litigation over land to which he claimed usufruct rights, but to which a Chinese had been granted a temporary title.[30]

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[30] In 1925, when 4,000 Chinese immigrants arrived in Sibu, a total of 3,100 temporary titles or O.T.'s were issued for "newly opened land," much of which was still claimed by Ibans as it had been farmed recently by them. This was a prime cause of the "Binatang Disputes of 1925" (SGG 16 August, 1926, see also SG No. 1331, 1969: 13-15).
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such as paying annual taxes, buying radio and bicycle licenses, requesting aid for padi planting, and legitimizing his land holdings.

C. Sibu as an Entrepot

In Chapter One we discussed the economic bases upon which Sibu has been built, together with the major phases in its development. In the last chapter, we described the immigration of the Foochow community and its domination of Sibu's commerce. We turn now to consider briefly the rise and characteristics of Sibu as a center of trade, for lacking any significant industrialization, the town and its residents have been largely dependent upon the import and export business.

By 1880, or eighteen years after the founding of Sibu, Hokkien traders had built two rows of forty shophouses each along what now is Channel Road. Taking advantage of the protection offered by the Fort and its force, the traders established their business of exchanging cloth, salt, hardware and valuables for jungle produce from the rich Rejang hinterland.

In 1903, the first Foochow shophouses were built on Channel Road, where a disastrous fire in 1898 had destroyed almost all of the former shophouses. Some of the Hokkien shopkeepers rebuilt and continued to do business with members of their own dialect group, Ibans and Malays. The Foochows at first tended to do business solely among themselves.

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Trade was light and irregular because of two factors: first, the principal items for export were the various jungle products, which were collected on a casual basis according to the inclination of the collectors as well as the signs and seasons.[31] Sometimes the indigenes appeared laden with goods for exchange, more often they did not.

Secondly, problems of shipping related to the distance of Sibu from the sea, and the difficulty of navigating the Rejang with its treacherous sandbars, prevented larger ocean-going vessels calling at the port, and made the trips of ships in and out of Sibu very irregular. Commenting on a voyage of the S.S. Rajah of Sarawak, Baring-Gould exulted that,

> "Captain McDonnell found little difficulty in navigating the vessel round the numerous sand banks in the river, but that the rocks below Sarikei are somewhat of a hinderance as they can only be passed on a rising ride; the depth at low water in places being 12 feet and at high water 24 feet."

The introduction of rubber and the proliferation of rubber gardens, and to a lesser extent pepper, provided products of more predictable and dependable character than the sometimes casually gathered jungle products.

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[31] A poorly-lined pig's liver, a bad dream, the cry of an omen bird, or a bird's flight from left (raup) instead of from the right (mimpin) could result in a collecting trip's being called off.

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The Chinese immigrants were the first to seize upon the potential in rubber, and Ibans were quick to follow their example. For rubber offered a viable alternative to rice, a dependable source of income, albeit mercurial, and an item which always could be exchanged.[32]

By 1920, the pasar was being expanded to handle the increased volume of business, and to provide employment for men either disinclined to horticulture or landless.[33] In March of that year, twenty-four lots for new shophouses were auctioned off on lanes leading off Channel Road.[34] One year later, a "pork and vegetable market" was started, and completed the following year. In November, 1925, a further fourteen shop sites were auctioned, bringing a total of S$44,600. Even at that early date, Sibu's land inflation had begun.[35]

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[32] Even a present with the price of rubber at only M$20 per picul, a large number of Ibans and Chinese continue to tap their trees; for, in the words of one man, "It's either tap or starve."

[33] Cf. SG No. 1167, 31 May, 1955:98, for a discussion of the number of Chinese who entered trade due to land pressures.

[34] Located on what are now Cross and Blacksmith Roads, these lots brought S$43,969 (SG No. 812, 2 May, 1921:107).

[35] Land in the Sibu pasar is sometimes calculated by the square foot as, for example, when the Sarawak Electricity Supply Company wanted to buy a small section of land for its purposes and paid several thousand dollars for about twenty square feet.

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177 Not all Chinese were inclined to forsake rice cultivation, for experiences of shortages of rice during and shortly after the First World War had convinced a number of them that in the absence of rice, rubber makes mighty tough chewing. By 1920, the Foochow production of rice had reached an estimated twenty thousand piculs, not wholly adequate for feeding their community but going far towards it. The Government purchased a rice mill and rice plant for husking the locally-grown rice both for consumption by the producers and for sale in the pasar. The single mill was inadequate, and shortly afterwards a second mill was purchased by two Chinese businessmen and set up at Sungai Bidut across from Sibu.

The rise of Sibu as an entrepot and its expansion permitted the channeling of a considerable part of the surplus population, i.e., those who either would not farm or could not farm for want of land, into trade. Yet despite the growth of trade and the building of shophouses, problems of unemployment and housing continued to beset the community. When rubber prices were high, owners of gardens took on help to tap the trees. But when the prices fell, the tappers were released "in hundreds and are unable to find work" (SG No. 809, 1 February, 1921:14). Government took on as many men as possible and set them to road-building and clearance. The shortage of available housing resulted in the rise of rentals, until more shophouses were built to receive the increase in

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population. There are several reports of unemployment, housing shortages and rise in rentals over the third and fourth decades of this century.

The immediate importance of these developments to this study is that they established a pattern which still is held to and practiced by Chinese and indigenes in times of want. That is, if rice crops fail and the price of rubber falls, men and women come into Sibu to seek for temporary, day-labor, such as unloading charcoal from lighters, or for more permanent work with construction companies. Absorption of a number, sometimes large, sometimes small, of under-employed persons from rural areas, and the creation of an expectation of such absorption has been a most significant development in Sibu's growth as a center of trade.[36]

By 1920, the volume of trade carried on in Sibu had more than trebled the amount at the beginning of the century. The total exports from Sibu in 1900 amounted to S$846,226, of which almost three-fourths (S$592,426) comprises gutta and other local rubber. By 1919, exports from Sibu had reached the amount of S$2,801,246, of which ninety-per

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[36] Many persons who come to Sibu looking for employment claim that there is no work for them in the rural areas. What actually is meant is that there is no work which they want to take up. As we will discuss in the following chapter, kereja ("work") in Iban has come to denote wage-earning, and the person who farms or taps rubber has no work according to this definition.

164 [165] enteritis (chirit) are common. According to several local doctors, gastroenterities is the main cause of deaths among infants, especially of Ibans and others in remote areas, from where they are brought in for treatment in such a dehydrated state that they are beyond help.

Other intestinal disorders such as diarrhea (chirit) and dysentery (bira' ka darah) are common. Worms (lundong) and other parasites contribute to a number of disorders, including distention of the abdomen, anemia, and a generally weakened condition in the hosts, and the incidence of parasitic infection in the indigenous population is virtually universal.

[165] [844] Tetanus (teganggam) continues to be a major cause of death in many more remote Iban communities, resulting from a ritual cutting of the umbilical cord with an unsterilized bamboo silver and then smearing the end of the [illegible] with ashes.

Leprosy (sakit lan) was the other major disease that was greatly feared by the local population, bearers being ostracized. Those who contract leprosy are sent to Kuching where a modern, well-equipped leprasarium has been constructed.

175 657 177 [178] Because of these and a score of other diseases, as well as various forms of mental illness, attention has been given to treatment and prevention as funds and personnel have been available. In 1902, a clinic and dispensary was built near Fort Brooke with a dresser in charge. This was expended into a small hospital but the response of Chinese and

indigenes was slight, each group preferring traditional medical practices. Thus, for example, a total of 1,744 patients were treated in the Sibu Hospital.

In 1931, on the eve of his return to China, a prominent Chinese from Engkilo, Lau King Howe, contributed one-half of the cost of a new hospital which still bears his name. The hospital has been expanded and now contains ten wards. Exposure to the work of doctors and nurses in the hospital has evoked an ever-increasing response from all groups. During the last year for which figures are available, a total of 106,520 patients were treated in the Hospital as indicated in Table 12.

TABLE 12

Number of Patients Treated
Lau King Howe Hospital
1970

Ethnic Group	Number	New Cases	Follow-ups	Admissions
Chinese	40,243	46,050	54,404	6,066
Iban	34,237			
Malay	32,040			
Total	106,520	Total of All Cases		106,520

In addition to the Government Hospital, eight private doctors practice in the pasar. Although these doctors in contrast to the socialized medicine of the hospital, charge for their services and medicines dispensed, they are frequented by hundreds of patients daily. The

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 187]

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000 and within one year of their arrival in Sarawak, the Foochow immigrants had started a school at Sungai Seduan. When Wong Nai Siong established the Foochow shophouses on what now is Channel Road, the school was moved to that site.

[658] Between 1904 and 1911, the Second Rajah's Government provided funds for the starting of a number of small schools in the outstations.

[797] Although Charles Brooke favored a limited education system for selected Ibans, he never implemented his ideas, and what education was provided for them was entirely in mission schools.

175 871 797 The first attempt at education among Ibans of the Sibu District was made by a Methodist missionary, Charles Davis, at Bukit Lan in 1915. His students were from Bawang Assan, and Davis drew up his own syllabus as well as writing all his materials. The school was short-lived, however, for Davis left Sarawak in 1916.

175 871 658 Education remained an almost entirely pasar activity until 1928 when the late Pengulu Nibong requested Government aid for beginning a school at Bawang Assan. It is not surprising that the first request from an Iban community of this District for a school should have been from Bawang Assan, given the exposure that the perceptive community leaders had had to be potential benefits of education through European officers and Chinese.

Other Iban communities were much slower in establishing schools, and when the Sungai Aup school was started in 1949, it was only the fourth

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Local Authority Iban school in the District. The attitude of many Ibans was, "We didn't go to school, and we can make a living. Why send our children to school?" As noted elsewhere, the Rajahs' fear that western-style education would destroy the "genius of Iban culture" led the Government to restrict Iban education to Standard Seven.

Following the Cession of Sarawak in 1946, the Colonial Government was pressed for educated staff and attainment even of Primary Four qualified many Ibans for teachers' training and employment. Those students who passed the Common Entrance Examination (Primary Six) went on to Secondary Schools, all of which at that time were located in the main pasars. The more prestigious ones were in Sibu and Kuching, and students who passed the Sarawak Junior Examination (Form Three) and Senior Cambridge Examination (Form Five) were assured employment either with Government or companies.

By the mid-1950's, the relationship between education and employment had been perceived by many Iban parents, and the rush was on for schools. By 1958, schools had been built in sixteen Iban communities, and as many more were clamoring for them. Similarly in the pasars, it soon became apparent that the Government Aided Schools could not handle the increasing numbers of students wanting to attend secondary school, and demands were made for permission to open private, unaided secondary

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811 schools.[44] By 1962, five unaided secondary schools had been started in
175 Sibu, taking students who did not pass the Common Entrance Examination.
658 Commenting on the situation, the District Officer in his report wrote that,

> "it is important that education should be related to the needs of the community in future. Regrettably but understandably this is proving as difficult in Sibu as everywhere else in the world owing to the universal preference for academic education leading to white collar jobs."

871 The equation of education and employment has been held tenaciously
464 by many parents, who have sacrificially paid as much as fifty to sixty dollars a month, in anticipation of future rewards through their children's employment. Those children who have been selected, that is, passed the Common Entrance Examination, and attended aided secondary schools until recently have had by far a better opportunity for passing the higher level examinations.[45] In response to a questionnaire mailed to all of the Iban students who had studied in aided secondary schools in the Sibu pasar between 1960 and 1970, of the 143 who returned the forms, all either are

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[44] These schools have been of widely varying qualities, and while some have provided a sound education others, in the words of one former official, have been nothing more than "money factories," enriching the investors and managers at the expense of parents and children.

[45] This generalization no longer is valid, for the results of some private secondary schools have been better than those of aided schools for the past two years.

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> The gap between schoolhouse and longhouse yawns ever wider; the situation was well epitomized by a certain teacher's crushing rebuke of a bad boy. . ., 'You are good for nothing but to be a farmer'."

It is small wonder that, given the expectations of parents and students, and the changes of values introduced and re-inforced through modern education, relatively highly educated young people return to the [657] longhouse communities for visits, but not live. And, despite Government's policy and urging them "back-to-the-country," young Ibans increasingly are going to seek new ways of living in the urban areas.

4. Recruitment

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[175] From the late nineteenth century onward, Ibans from the Sibu District and other areas travelled in search of work and adventure not only within Sarawak but as far afield as New Ginea. In an account of his wanderings, Tuba Aki Polly of Bawang Assan has recounted how he signed on with a company for work in Malacca and, upon completion of that contract (sain, "sign"), signed on with another company and worked for one year in New Guinea.

464 Not all Ibans are so adventurous, not inclined to wander so far in search of work,[47] and the growth of Sibu has permitted many more to find employment and adventure closer to home. We have noted already in

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[47] Several Iban men with whom I have talked expressed a desire to move away from their home areas and into the Sibu pasar, but said that they were afraid to, because they were uneducated and unskilled.

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In summary, the growth and development of Sibu as an urban center for administration, trade, education, recruitment and recreation has profoundly affected not only the lives of the predominantly Chinese immigrant population but also those of the Ibans as well. Paying taxes, competing in business, seeking positions for their children in school, looking for work and coming to the pasar for a good time, the Ibans have through accommodation and acculturation experienced important changes in their social organization and culture as we shall discuss in Part II.

A. Rice Horticulture

The Ibans who moved into the Sibu District during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shifting cultivators. The main characteristics of shifting cultivation are,

> "rotation of fields rather than crops; clearing by means of fire; absence of draft animals and of manuring; use of human labour only; employment of the dibble stick. . . ; short periods of soil occupancy alternating with long fallow periods."

As already discussed in Chapter Two, the movements of the Ibans into the area were due to a number of factors, one being the growth of the population in the Second Division, another the Iban value of new land and the status accorded the pioneer, a cultural reinforcement of an adaptive mechanism.

The horticulture of the Ibans did not involve rotation of fields so much as the gradual extension of their farms down the Sarikei and Kanowit, and their tributaries, and on across the Rejang and up the northern branches of tributaries of the Rejang and Igan. As one Tuai Rumah related,

> "We moved from Julau to Nanga Salim, thence we farmed both sides of the river, moving to uncleared and unclaimed areas and finally came to Ulu Salim."

The settlements of the Ibans who moved into the District were by no means as permanent as they are today. Rather, temporary houses were constructed in proximity to land selected for farming, and abandoned when the Ibans moved to new sites. As two women recounted the story of

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IBAN CULTURE

186 From birth to death, the Iban is impressed with his ethnic identity vis-a-vis other ethnic groups. Through legends and myths, told on the longhouse ruai or broadcast over Radio Malaysia, he is made aware of the great crowd of ancestral witnesses who surround him, and to whom he owes his life. Although the group of which he immediately is aware may be limited to his longhouse community, he readily identifies with fellow Ibans of other districts and divisions through sharing a common language, adat and corpus of beliefs. According to his need and convenience, the kinship system may be manipulated to include or exclude fellow Ibans.

181 In the pluralistic state of Sarawak, the Iban are the most aggressiv of the indigenous people. This characteristic of aggression is, at least in part, a reflection of the confidence which the Iban feel in their self-identity. Casual observers have commented on the strength of the Iban, the pride of the individual in himself and in his ethnic group. And Freeman, through intense observation, described them as "untrammelled individualists, aggressive and proud in demeanour."

175 [181] The strong sense of personal and corporate indentity of the Ibans has been one of the factors which has helped them become the most numerous and most powerful of the indigenous people. During their invasion of

175 Sarawak in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Iban population increase occurred in part by natural increase and in part through the assimilation of captured members of other ethnic groups. The Melanaus, Bajangs and other former occupants of the Rejang valley were driven out, so that today, the Iban occupy what are to them the more desirable territories, and have greater access to towns and markets.

178 441 Within the past ten years, Iban traders have begun to insinuate themselves into spheres of business which previously had been the domain of the Chinese and, to a much lesser extent, the Malays. Whereas two years ago the Iban market was a joking matter among Chinese hawkers, today it is 162 the scene of a great volume of trade. And while the Iban population of [369] Sibu still tends to be a floating one, with individuals coming in to transact business in Government offices, to sell produce, or for treatment at the hospital, the number of Ibans taking up permanent residence is rapidly increasing. In the words of one man who returned to Sibu after two-years' absence,

> "Man, this isn't a Chinese town any longer. It's half Iban!"

666 177 In politics, Iban leaders such as Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Thomas Kana, Sidi Muman and Stephen Kalong Ningkan have been prominent in the formation and development of the more indigenous-dominated parties. Unfortunately, in more than a single instance, the strength of individual leaders, the conflict of "big-man" competition, and the lack of a tradition of unity built upon superordinate-subordinate relationships, has proved the undoing of group interests.

to test the mettle of the ulun berani. For, unlike the former type of slave, the slave of bravery could be redeemed and adopted as a blood-brother, if judged worthy by observation of his conduct and character.[6]

The basic value of self-sufficiency and its sub-categories, together with the concomitant division of Iban society into three classes based upon success or failure to attain the ideal, has been pre-adaptive for the Iban's participation in a cash economy and entrance into economic classes recognizable in this pluralistic society. By the end of the second decade of this century, many Ibans in the Sibu District had become money-wise and were aware of the goods money could buy, as well as the security it offered. In his quarterly report, the Resident for the Lower Rejang described the Iban's hoarding of copper coinage (SG No. 767, 16 April, 1919). As early as 1902, the Iban of the Rejang were buying "old Busa jars" (SG No. 437, 2 June, 1902 p. 125), for amounts ranging from $100 to $200. The introduction of shotguns resulted in their purchase by thousands of Iban,[7] so that it now is exceptional for a family not to have at least one shotgun. Jars, different types of brassware such as gongs, pinang containers, condiment trays and lamps, as well as shotguns,

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[6] In a ritual of redemption (tenbang or tebus), the slave was freed and his new status declared. At the same time he was given gifts, symbolizing his beginning a new life and relationship to other members of the community.

[7] In the store under the Sibu District Office, thousands of shotgun registration forms are stored.

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were early wealth indicators, all requiring cash or a surplus of marketable goods for their purchase.

Although the Iban were quick to perceive the benefits attainable with money, cash has been difficult to come by for a large majority of Iban, and even more difficult to keep. The sale of jungle produce and rubber brought in relatively small amounts of money to individual families, and during the timber boom, much larger sums were acquired by pengulu, tuai rumah and the anembiak rédak. But most of such cash was received on an irregular basis, and either found its way almost immediately back into the pockets of Chinese merchants, or was expended on a gawai, to buy name and fame and satisfy cultural demands.

Opportunities for employment in the pasar were severely limited for Ibans during the first half of this century. The Brooke administration discouraged education among the movement of Ibans to the pasar. As Pringle writes,

> "He (Charles Brooke) knew that such abilities would not survive formal[8] education. He also believed that the longhouse people were likely to be corrupted by the sinful practices of the bazaar. He particularly feared that Iban girls, conditioned by the permissiveness of their own courtship customs, would be easily led into prostitution."

In the opinion of one Iban leader, educational opportunities were opened for Iban students only to the Seventh Standard (seven years study)

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[8] Loss of sensitivity and orientation to jungle life, as well as atrophy of mnemonic abilities was feared by the Second Rajah.

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871 because of two reasons. First, the Brookes were afraid that the Iban
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175 would lose their traditional culture. Secondly, they were afraid that
829 educated Ibans would be dangerous Ibans, i.e., unwilling to accept without question the paternalistic Brooke administration which was weighted heavily against their advance through its stereotyping of their culture, as well as being heavily pro-Malay.

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658 The cession of Sarawak to the British Government in 1946 resulted in a more open and equitable arrangement for the Ibans. They were permitted access to higher education, and a large number of Local Authority Schools
[369] were built. Whereas previously only a small handful of Ibans lived in Sibu prior to the cession, by 1947 their number was 259 and by 1960, almost 700.

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871 Thus, education and wage-earning offered viable alternatives to the traditional value of self-sufficiency and status according to rice production.
464 Education, at first even at a Primary 4 or 6 level, later at higher standards,
[183] permitted the student to find employment in a number of jobs, ranging from primary school teachers to clerks in Government and companies, and even to attain to senior government positions.

[77] > "To become a government employee. . .has meant many things: social status (and the titles and uniforms to match), economic security, a comfortable life with relatively modern conveniences, and, essentially, identification with a Western (rather than a native) style of life."

The initial skepticism of many Iban parents about education was overcome by reports of the employment opportunities available to students.

152 The fear of shame or embarrassment (malu) is a powerful motivation among the Iban. One of the most serious offenses that can be perpertrated against an Iban is to embarrass him and similarly, embarrassing appearances 177 and situations are to be eschewed by all means possible. Thus, personal pride and a fear of shame is one factor which motivates many Ibans to [535] identify with and emulate members of other groups and their fashions. In some communities the traditional styles of dance (ngajat) are passing, and in the evenings young people practice rumba, tuis ("twist") and konga ("conga").

[183] [152] While fear of ridicule and shame have contributed to the acculturation of some Ibans to the values of other groups, at the same time the possibility of rewards also has been a powerful factor. We have discussed the reasons behind the clamor for education and schools as a means to employment. We now will consider the entrance of thousands of Ibans into Christian churches as an example of the norms of mobility and opportunism under discussion.

175 797 Although the Roman Catholic Church has been established in the Third Division for more than a century, until recently its work has been limited primarily to the pasars and the growth of Iban constituents restricted accordingly. Despite the establishment of the Methodist Church in the Third Division by the first Foochow settlers, the entrance of Ibans into the Methodist Church began only after the Second World War. In 1949, a group of 32 Ibans, among them Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Pengarah Sibat anak Semada, and Pengulu Jinggut, three of the most powerful leaders in

the upper Rejang area, were baptized in Kapit. The first Ibans in the Sibu District to enter the Methodist Church were from Bawang Assan, where more than 250 were baptized on one day. During the past two decades, more than 16,000 Ibans of the Third Division, about 11,000 in the Sibu District and below, have masok Keristin ("become Christians").

The reasons why a majority of Ibans have joined the Methodist Church are illustrative of the importance of these two norms, for most of those who have become Christians are the more mobile[22] and have perceived opportunities for personal or group benefit through identification with the church. In discussing the reasons for the entrance of the large group from Bawang Assan one of the community leaders said that,

> "following the Japanese War, we were suspected of having collaborated with the Japanese. We knew that the British were Christians, and we wanted to be identified with them. So, after much discussion, we agreed that we could clear our names and show our identity with the British by becoming Christians."

We have discussed how the Christian church is looked upon as a benevolent fraternalism, an extension of the Ibans' model of the kin-group. Thus, the church is looked to as an agency for help in time of need. More than a score of Ibans whom I asked about their reasons for becoming Christians replied to the effect that,

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[22] Among more conservative and traditional communities, there is little interest in and response to the work of Christian churches.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

128 In the Introduction to this study, questions were raised about the effects of urbanization on indigenous societies and cultures. In light of the foregoing data we are now prepared to draw conclusions about effects the emergence of Sibu as an administrative center-cum-entrepot have had on the Ibans.

177 The growth of Sibu into a bustling urban center has had a profound influence and powerful impact on the Ibans of the Sibu District and Third Division. From the time of the establishment of Fort Brooke and the forced settlement of recalcitrant Ibans under supervision of its staff, Sibu has grown in importance upon the cognitive maps of Ibans, so that today it is a center to which they repair when funds and time permit. The frequent contacts and long associations with Malays and Chinese, the other principals of the area, have led to social and cultural exchanges from which all have emerged as borrowers.

175 The Brooke strategy of population control through the construction
657 and staffing of forts at key points was highly effective in suppressing
177 traditional Iban practices of migrating and head-hunting. The forced settlement of some Ibans and the voluntary settlement of others who sought refuge from their predator peers were of immense importance in

light of ecological and structural changes that have occurred. Ibans traditionally had practiced shifting cultivation to which the institutions of pejalai, augury and head-hunting were related. Those who settled for whatever reasons near the fort found themselves in a situation of impeded mobility,[1] and required to undertake new forms of adaptation.

Ecologically, the settlement of Ibans in the District required a shift from dry-rice to wet-rice cultivation among those who settled on the banks of the major rivers. Alternatively, they could farm hill-rice at some distance from their homes. The shift to wet-rice cultivation was an adaptation to the flatter lands and higher water table. New techniques for cultivation of wet-rice fields were learned and were accompanied by the development of a new liturgy suitable for wet-rice cultivation.[2]

Sedentariness and proximity to the town have provided opportunities for the development of new techniques and cultivation. The examples of Chinese and instruction of agriculturalists have helped raise the yields of Iban rice fields. The introduction of pack-sprayers and selective herbicides together with other aid contributed by the Agricultural Department have helped to strengthen the dependence of the Iban farmer upon the pasar.

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[1] Movements continued within the District, but these were involved primarily with the spread of Ibans along the banks of the large rivers or the ascent of their tributaries. Impeded mobility resulted from Government regulations and from the immigration of Chinese settlers.

[2] Comparisons of rituals observed by Ibans practicing dry-rice cultivation and those practicing wet-rice cultivation reveal numerous differences.

175 361 342 178 At the beginning of this century, recognizing that they were here to stay, Ibans in the Bawang Assan area constructed the first permanent longhouse in memory, the rumah papan ("house of planks"). Previously, house construction had been predicated upon the frequent movements of the shifting cultivators, and was of an impermanent nature. Sedentary settlements of Iban groups have been marked by the erection of substantial longhouses. Although the future of the longhouse domicile may be in question, Iban house-types, whether individual dwelling or attenuated structure, are permanent buildings.

654 423 197 A radically new concept of land tenure resulted from the establishment of the Lands and Survey Department which claimed the right to register land and to issue permits and titles. In Iban polity land was held under usufruct rights by descendants of a pioneer who cleared it. Land disputes were settled within the longhouse community by appeal to senior members or others who were familiar with migrations and genealogies. Setting up a department to handle land matters represented an incursion of external authority into Iban society, the erosion of traditional polity, and the orientation of its members to the Opis Lan Ensabi as the locus of power in land matters.

177 657 The Second Rajah's encouragement of Chinese trade and immigration helped to produce a situation he wanted to avoid, in which sociocultural change has taken place among the Ibans. The frequent contacts and long associations of Ibans with Chinese and Malays have led to social and

cultural exchanges from which all have emerged as borrowers. Shortly after the settlement of Ibans in the District, the Rajah's policies encouraging the immigration of Chinese were implemented. Thousands of Foochow, Cantonese and Henghua settlers arrived in the state and began their spread up and down the banks of the major rivers of the Third Division. Although brought into the state to grow rice, the Chinese learned painfully and quickly that rice cannot be grown profitably by hand and that greater gains lay in rubber and pepper. The more astute Ibans were fast to follow the example of the Chinese, planting gardens and harvesting cash incomes from the new crops. The shift to rubber and pepper was a step of both economic and cultural importance. It led to a diversification of incomes from resources more dependable than collection of jungle products. Conservative Ibans saw the shift as one away from rice cultivation and potentially destructive of traditional values (cf. p. 37).

Production of rubber and pepper involved an increasing number of Ibans in the embryonic trade network which grew in Sarawak in the first decades of this century. Heretofore they had exchanged jungle products with Chinese and Malay traders. Rubber and pepper were more reliable products, and often more easily obtainable. Although the Ibans long had exchanged forest produce for such valuables as jars and brassware, the establishment of permanent settlements and more regular incomes from cash crops contributed to an acceleration of this trade.

178 439 Until the last decade or so, the trading network was operated almost entirely by Malays and Chinese. Only they had the external contacts in Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong to handle imports and exports. Within the past decade, however, Ibans have begun to supplant Chinese traders at the village level. For, more than jars and brassware moved [436] over the trading network. Through the exchange of goods Ibans have acquired an orientation to a cash economy and mercantile mentality, the better to obtain more goods and status.

183 198 The tradtional value system placed a premium on performance in the areas of rice-cultivation and bravery, among men, and weaving skills [462] among women. New values of money and salable materials provided new bases [464] for differentiation between members of Iban society. Employment and [871] education, available principally in urban areas, have eroded traditional values and radically affected Iban social structure.

175 657 167 Although the Ibans were related to the pasar through the trading network and administrative functions which increasingly impinged upon their lives, the Brooke government discouraged the movement of Ibans into the pasar for fear of changes in the traditional society and culture as they had conceptualized them. The Brookes and their officers conceived of themselves as protectors of an Iban ethos which they had stereotyped. The role of the Ibans was cast in terms of the military functions which they might perform and every attempt was made to preserve [871] this role. They were permitted to attend mission schools but there was no encouragement or support from the Brooke government for Iban education.

175 Given the pressures to conform to rural roles interpreted for them by
657 government officers and unsubtle dissuasion from moving into the pasar,
167 it is hardly surprising that few Ibans found their ways into the towns.

175 Towards the end of the Brooke Raj, Vyner Brooke made plans for
657 liberalization of Iban administration. These plans were cut short by the
[877] Japanese occupation. However, following the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown in 1946, new opportunities were made available to the Ibans for education and for participation in a broader range of political and economic activities. Local authority schools for Ibans were opened in
[631] rural areas. Selected Iban students entered secondary schools. Participation of Iban leaders in councils at all levels was encouraged.

175 The economy immediately after the war was in a quiescent state,
648 for many Chinese still maintained a "back-to-China" dream which precluded their investment of profits locally. The establishment of the Communist government in China shattered the dream, and served to stimulate the local economy. Unwilling to return to China and risk their fortunes, local Chinese invested in businesses, land and buildings. They soon were joined by other Chinese who fled the mainland and swelled Sibu's population in the 1950's. The economy received a further boost when the Korean War brought a demand for rubber which soared to unprecedented prices, giving way to timber as the major export only in 1964. Exploitation of rubber and timber made cash available to the public generally and allowed quick fortunes to be amassed in a few cases.

A DAYAK INVASION

Christmas and New Year at Sibu

175 177 Boxing Day passed off peacefully, the prevailing calm being broken at intervals by the whoops and yells of boatloads of Dayaks, who seemed to arrive every few minutes. Everyone who was present will remember this as a Dayak Christmas, - for ten days the island was crowded with them, and the officers on whom fell the burden of organizing the aum had a lively time of it. It is a curious fact that the Dayak, a most independent and self-reliant gentleman in his own country, at once becomes as helpless as a child, if he thinks that there is any chance by this display of helplessness, to cause someone (preferably a European) to make a fuss of him. To listen to the hard-luck stories of most of the Dayaks made one think that they had never left their homes before, and that starvation was the least of the perils with which they were faced; it was not a little amusing to hear Dayaks whom one knew personally to be more than a match for even the shrewdest Chinese traders, complaining in pathetic tones that they were utterly lost in the turmoil of a great city like Sibu, and that unless they were looked after every minute of the day and kept well supplied with belanja, they would surely perish; and it was no less amusing after this confession, to see them go straight to the nearest gold or silversmith's shop and buy up a good proportion of the stock without

199 batting an eyelid! Oh well, Dayaks are not the only people who like a
175 try-on.

Dayaks are everywhere, in the streets, in the shops, on the wharves on the padangs, and of course in the Government offices, where the cry of minta belanja, Tuan, rose like the wailing of a great multitude, and their
175 outstretched palms were thick as the spears of Senacherib. All of them
177 were in their smartest clothes, and weired and wonderful was the display
292 of Iban finery, ranging from the dirty white trousers and co-respondent shoes of the "civilized" Dayaks (great are the blessings of education), to the resplendent chawats and gorgeous woven jackets of the upriver people. Hats shewed a like diversity, the most popular being a red fez wrapped with a kind of cloth-of-gold in which were stuck artifical flowers; but there were also other varieties, notably the "donkey's breakfast," of which there were one or two fine examples, and a kind of Homburg of a poisonous green tint, worn in some cases athwartships, and not fore-and-aft. This later style was most effective, and was indeed only rivalled by a Wolseley helmet of about 1887 vintage, which acted as a sort extinguisher to a Dayak of venerable aspect, whose long grey hairs rather clashed with the martial aspect of his head-gear.

175 Ornaments included the usual bead necklaces, silver chains and
301 bangles, but the whole jaw of a honey-bear, embossed with gold and worn around the neck as a pendant, excited much favourable comment. Tiger-cat's teeth, too, were prominent, but earnings were not as good as might have been expected; it needed the Kayans to provide really good specimens of this form of decoration, and no Kayans had come down.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

000 this form of decoration, and no Kayans had come down.

• 195 657 On the 27th, 28th and 29th December, preliminary meetings were held to prepare the materials and clear the way for the final aum besai on the 31st. These meetings were conducted by the Resident with the assistance of the Secretary for Native Affairs, and were attended by Administrative Officers, Native Officers and all Penghulus. It was decided to standardize the Dayak customs and fines throughout the Third Division and, after many hours of talk, this was at last accomplished, the assembled chiefs agreeing to a draft code.

[Information on British Borneo may be found in 18: Sutlive, OC6 Iban, category 116, pp. 11-200, passim; and especially on pp. 68-110; 137-200 and 379-382.]